



ICCR LIBRARY



E20675

# **INDIA WINS ERRORS**

A Scrutiny of Maulana Azad's  
*India Wins Freedom*

RAJMOHAN GANDHI



RADIANT PUBLISHERS

Copyright Rajmohan Gandhi 1989

ISBN 81-7027-142-8 (hardback)

ISBN 81-7027-143-6 (paperback)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

First published in 1989 in India by  
RADIANT PUBLISHERS  
E-155 Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019

Printed in India by  
Repro Offset, A-248 Okhla Industrial Area, Phase I, New Delhi

*To Eminence  
before she composes  
her memoirs*



## *Contents*

Introduction	1
1 Congress, the Raj and Jinnah	11
2 The War Destroys an Equilibrium	25
3 Quit India and its Sequel	34
4 Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Azad: Equations in the Congress High Command	48
5 Fatal Ambiguity: The Story of the Cabinet Mission Plan	54
6 The Acceptance of Partition	72
7 What Remains of <i>India Wins Freedom</i> - and of Azad	90
Sources and Bibliography	97
Notes and References	100
Index	107



## Preface

I was and am devoted to the memory of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. It was in Simla in the summer of 1945 that, as a boy of ten, I first saw him. He, the Mahatma, Jinnah, Nehru, Patel, Rajagopalachari and some others had been called by Viceroy Wavell for talks in the hill town. Along with Patel, Nehru and others of the Congress Working Committee, Azad, its President, had just emerged from a three-year prison term. The bones pressing against the white skin of his thin face and the whiteness of his beard and moustache were etched in my memory. When in February 1958 he died, I found myself in the crowd paying homage around his body. Years later it was a stirring experience for me to study his life to some extent and write about it.

That piece about Azad was part of my *Eight Lives: A Study of the Hindu-Muslim Encounter*\*. Jinnah, Iqbal and Sayyid Ahmed Khan were among the others I tried to assess in that book. When, later, I began a research into the life of Vallabhbhai Patel, I was intrigued by a remark in Azad's *India Wins Freedom*. Referring to the election of a new Congress President in 1946, Azad had said: "Gandhiji was perhaps somewhat inclined towards Sardar Patel, but once I had proposed Jawaharlal's name, he gave no public indication of his views." This picture of Gandhi's preference was at variance with other accounts, and I wondered where the truth lay. Earlier I had noticed that *India Wins Freedom*'s figures for the voting in the AICC meeting (of June 1947) that ratified the Working Committee's acceptance of partition were incorrect, but I had put that down to a proof-reading error or, at worst, to a slip of the Maulana's pen or memory.

---

\* retitled *Understanding the Muslim Mind* in paperback.



When examination revealed that Azad's statement regarding Gandhi's stand in 1946 was entirely false, I began to wonder about the other facts of *India Wins Freedom*. cursory checking sufficed to show that the suspicion engendered in me was justified, and I felt the urge to examine the book in detail. This feeling was opposed for a while by the thought that fault-catching was not a constructive activity, but I could not banish the desire to see, if not prepare myself, a correction of *India Wins Freedom's* errors. Someone had to provide it. "Why not me?" soon replaced "Why me?" but I had to wait for the closed portion of *India Wins Freedom* to come out. This happened in November 1988.

I must acknowledge a debt to a small book called "Inconsistencies of Azad" by Amalendu Ray, which I had read in the course of my study of Azad's life. Though I was unaware of it at the time, "Inconsistencies" had dropped a seed at the back of my mind. I have consulted it again and with profit.

This study could not have materialised but for the facilities and material available at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. I am grateful to its authorities and staff. My biggest debt is to my wife who typed the text and supplied valuable ideas for improving it.

Though corrections can never wholly catch up with what they are chasing, I hope that the following pages will reach at least some among the many who are liable to recycle material from *India Wins Freedom*. Since corrections on their part are seldom entirely free of errors, I shall be grateful if my mistakes are pointed out, and would want to rectify them in any new edition.

## Estimates of *India Wins Freedom*

"You must not take the book as verbally correct. Obviously it is not. But broadly speaking it does seem to me to represent Maulana Azad's broad way of thinking."

Jawaharlal Nehru on February 7, 1959

"The book (gives) the impression that Azad was extremely vain and self-centred. Really he was not at all like that...."

C. Rajagopalachari in 1959

"Rarely has an insider written with such frankness about events hitherto unrevealed...How independence was negotiated and who was responsible for the simultaneous disaster of partition is told in this autobiography."

Louis Fischer in 1960

"The book contains at least one lie on each page and is also wholly unreliable in respect of historical interpretation."

Rammanohar Lohia in 1960

"It would require a volume as big as he (Azad) had written to correct all his misstatements and misconceptions."

J. B. Kripalani in 1970

"Painful disclosures. . . .(The memoirs) reveal the poignant anguish of a nationalist par excellence."

*India Today*, November 15, 1988

"A welcome contribution to historical research."

Reader's letter in *Indian Express*, December 4, 1988

(See page 97 for sources not indicated on this page)



## Introduction

This study aims principally at noting and correcting the misstatements in Azad's *India Wins Freedom*. It does not seek to give an alternative account of the course of India's freedom movement or to analyze the causes of India's partition.

Azad's prestige matters. He personified faith in Hindu-Muslim compatibility. His faith burned bright and strong even amidst storms. Remove him from history; remove Hakim Ajmal Khan (1863-1927), Dr Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari (1880-1936) and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890-1988) as well; the drama of Hindu-Muslim partnership in the movement for freedom is then robbed of its Muslim protagonists.

The flame in Azad's pen and tongue matched the fire of his faith. "He has it in him to move millions by his voice and pen," Nehru observed in June 1942.<sup>1</sup> Yet the Maulana was always reluctant to rub shoulders with the crowd and preferred the solitude of his eminence. At the age of 25 he was writing - in the words of Kripalani, a frequent critic - "with the assurance of a mature and well-trained expert"<sup>2</sup> Employed in "a new moving style", Azad's Urdu in *Al Hilal*, the journal he started in 1912, was so "amazingly forceful" that readers across India refused to believe that its author was only 24 years old.<sup>3</sup> As for Azad's tongue, Jayaprakash Narayan has testified that he enlisted in the 1920 struggle after hearing a speech by Azad.<sup>4</sup>

A hero to India's Muslims from the days of *Al Hilal*, which simultaneously preached pure Islam and Indian independence, Azad became a hero to Hindus as well because he never forsook his faith in Hindu-Muslim partnership. It was needed, he held, to fight alien rule; and it would be needed after freedom. In the crucial 1940s, the

bulk of his qaum followed Jinnah and favoured Pakistan, but Azad, who could have led the qaum had he chosen to follow the crowd, stuck to his ground, to his belief in a composite India.

Yet his greatest contribution owed more to the breadth of his mind than to the loyalty of his feet or the eloquence of his words. After a close study of the Qur'an - after deliberating, Azad claimed, "over every chapter, every verse, every phrase and every word"<sup>5</sup> -, he declared with a scholar's authority that cooperation between Muslims and monotheistic Hindus was not merely sanctioned by Islam; it was "a fundamental injunction".<sup>6</sup> Derived, he asserted, from the Qur'an itself, Azad's universalist interpretation of Islam entitles him to a pioneer's place.

The prestige of Azad is thus an element in Hindu-Muslim relations, in the story of our freedom struggle and in Islam's theological debates. Yet Azad's prestige is by no means the same thing as the prestige of his *India Wins Freedom*. In Chapter Seven we will examine whether the Maulana's reputation will survive a demonstration of the blemishes in *India Wins Freedom*. Yet the flaws in the book ought in any case to be pointed out - for the sake of truth, which is more important than the reputation, no matter how crucial, of any man.

Azad's prestige is in fact one of two powerful reasons - *India Wins Freedom's* wide distribution being the other - for a careful scrutiny of the book's statements. Had they been asserted by one with a lesser standing, or in a book with a smaller sale, the statements of *India Wins Freedom* could have been safely ignored. Neither is the case. What is more, while the 30-year-wait for the 30 pages of *India Wins Freedom* left out of the original (1959) edition of the book heightened the public's curiosity, the 1988 court battles over the rights to *IWF's* text raised it to an even higher pitch.

Meanwhile, excerpts from *IWF* have entered numerous scholarly studies and reference volumes and are bound to continue doing so. Thus the noted jurist, H.M. Seervai, cites *IWF* almost 20 times in his section on the Transfer of Power in his *Constitutional Law of India*; the editors of the *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* seem to have relied upon *IWF's* statements for some of their notes in *SWJN*;<sup>7</sup> and the editor of Wavell's diaries has done likewise in the *Viceroy's Journal*.<sup>8</sup> The present writer has himself unquestioningly used several sentences from *IWF* in *Eight Lives*; some of these sentences have since been found erroneous. Now that the new, complete and unex-

purgated version of *IWF* has been greeted, as we saw under "Estimates of *India Wins Freedom*", as "a contribution to historical research", quotes from it can be expected to enter a fresh series of studies. The case for correcting the book is unassailable.

Some of the corrections will assist Hindu-Muslim relations. To show that some of the charges in *IWF* against Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Prasad are false will not prove that non-Muslims were always just to Muslims during the years of the freedom struggle. They were not, even as Muslims were not always just to non-Muslims. But when they are ill-founded, allegations of communalism do not serve the cause of Hindu-Muslim friendship, and proof that they lack basis can only help that cause.

"Do we, Indian Mussalmans," asked Azad in his well-known 1940 address as Congress President, "view the future of India with suspicion and distrust or with courage and confidence? If we view it with fear and suspicion, then undoubtedly we will have to follow a different path...Every fibre of my being revolted against this alternative."<sup>9</sup> Some of the errors in *IWF* fuel the suspicions and fears against which Azad revolted. Removing them can only help the objective, dear to Azad, of Hindu-Muslim friendship.

A few "harmless" errors have also been noted in this study. There is no reason why misstatements even of a minor kind should be perpetuated; and sometimes damaging falsifications can sail on the backs of "inconsequential" ones. Did Nehru accompany the Chiangs on their visit to Agra to see the Taj in 1942, as Azad claims he did? Can anything possibly hinge on so trivial a point? Yes. Whether or not Nehru played host to the Chiangs in Agra may tell us something about the supineness or strength at the time of Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy. Did Gandhi favour, as Azad claims, Patel's election as Congress President in 1946, rather than Nehru's? If he did, and if we also accept Azad's view that Patel frequently acted as a communalist, then we are close to adopting the line spread by the Muslim League in the forties that Hindu supremacy was Gandhi's and Congress's true and secret aim.

"These debates about what happened in the past are merely vanity." So said Rajaji when asked, in 1959, if he would correct Azad's version, as published in *IWF*, of the story of India's partition.<sup>10</sup> Yet failure to get at the truth of what happened may result in a repetition of unwelcome happenings. Even if debates about the past are seen as fruitless, on the assumption that no one in

power learns from history, it is desirable that the debates be truthful at least.

Are we right, while pointing out *IWF*'s errors, to call them Azad's? How sure are we that he wrote *IWF*? Though there appears to be "nothing in writing from Maulana Saheb to show that the book was entirely dictated by him or approved by him",<sup>11</sup> it seems clear that the text is on the whole Azad's. Humayun Kabir's account, written in March 1958, of "how the work has been composed" is as follows:

"During these last two years or so, I spent on an average an hour or more every evening with Maulana Azad. . . .He was a wonderful conversationalist and used to describe his experiences in vivid terms. I made fairly copious notes. . . .When I collected sufficient material for a chapter, I prepared a draft in English. He read each chapter by himself and then we went over it together. We proceeded in this way until I was able to give him the first draft of the completed book in September 1957. . . .

"He went through it again during the period when I was away in Australia. After my return, we went through the manuscript chapter by chapter and indeed sentence by sentence. . . .On Republic Day this year, Maulana Azad said that he was satisfied with the manuscript and it could now be sent to the printers. The book as now released represents the text as finally approved by him." (*Preface*, pp. xi-xii)

According to Kabir, therefore, Azad dictated the text, worked twice over each chapter, once by himself and once along with Kabir, then went through the whole book by himself and finally revised the entire text, again taking Kabir's help. The testimony of M.N. Masud, Private Secretary to Azad from 1948 to 1952 and again from 1957 to 1958 - the period when, according to Kabir, Azad worked on *IWF* -, corroborates Kabir's account. Says Masud:

"Maulana Azad started dictating his autobiography almost every day of the week from the beginning of 1957. Kabir Saheb would go to his room in the evening and would take down in long hand Maulana Saheb's dictation, would translate it on the following day or days and submit the draft for Maulana Saheb's approval. What can be said is that every word of the book had been dictated by Maulana Saheb and approved by Maulana Saheb. It is completely untrue to say that Kabir Saheb on his own added something to it after the death of Maulana Saheb."<sup>12</sup>

According to Masud's testimony, Azad was to have signed an agreement with the publishers of *India Wins Freedom* on the morning of February 18, 1958 but was compelled by pressure of work to postpone the exercise to the next day. The paralytic stroke that was to end Azad's life came, however, on the morning of the 19th - before Azad could sign the agreement. The drama that has marked the book's history was thus present even during its beginnings.<sup>13</sup>

Masud, who was India's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 1961 to 1965, also makes the point that the English of *IWF* is "entirely different" from "the style of Kabir Saheb's own writings". Since "there cannot be two entirely different styles of writings from the same pen," Masud concludes that Kabir cannot be the author of *IWF*. He is its translator. In *IWF*, affirms Masud, "every word is Maulana Saheb's word, and everything was approved by him".<sup>14</sup> The evidence of Masud was given in 1973, fifteen years before the controversy over the rights to *IWF*'s text, and thus bears no relation to that controversy. Protecting Kabir was not Masud's motive - the latter's version of the story of the 30 pages kept out of the 1959 edition is quite different from Kabir's.

But before tackling that problem we should look at Nehru's comments made soon after *IWF* was published, especially the ones that may have a bearing on its authenticity. Answering questions at a Press Conference on February 7, 1959, Nehru said that he "had read the book in manuscript with great care".<sup>15</sup> He added that Kabir had given the manuscript to him. Though Kabir "did not like publication of some passages in the book", Nehru was opposed to the "suppression of anything that Maulana Saheb wanted to be published". In fact, Nehru went on, he, the Prime Minister, "was more responsible than anyone else" for the book's publication, even though it could not be taken as "verbally correct" and even though its language was "not exactly (Azad's) necessarily".<sup>16</sup>

The "great care" with which Nehru had read the manuscript obviously convinced him that it was Azad's work and text. If the language seemed "not exactly" the same as Azad's, that was because the language was the translator's, and translations very seldom breathe the original's flavour. The matter was Azad's. If Nehru had felt any doubt he would certainly have expressed it. Being the target of several of *IWF*'s criticisms, Nehru, more than most others, had a motive for questioning its authenticity, and his not questioning it amounts to proof. Taken together, the testimonies of Kabir, Masud



and Nehru establish that on the whole Azad is the author of *IWF*. We may note, finally, that as far as the present writer is aware, Azad's authorship of *IWF* has not been seriously challenged or disputed by any member of his family.

The qualifications "on the whole", used twice and deliberately in this introduction, will be understood if we look at the question of the 30 pages. Says Kabir: "When he had the completed text in his hands (in September 1957), Maulana Azad decided that some thirty pages of the text dealing with incidents and reflections mainly of a personal character should not be published for the present. He directed that a copy each of the complete text should be deposited under sealed cover in the National Library, Calcutta, and the National Archives, New Delhi. . . .I carried out the changes according to his instructions and was able to present to Maulana Azad the revised and abridged draft towards the end of November 1957." (*Preface, p. xii*)

The foregoing means that Azad's "direction" for depositing the 30 pages under sealed cover was issued between September 1957 and November 1957, and also suggests (without explicitly saying so) that the direction was carried out during that period. However neither Kabir's Preface to the 1959 edition, from which the remarks quoted above have been taken, nor his "Editor's Note", bearing the date 2 April, 1959 and published for the first time as an appendix to "the complete, unexpurgated edition" of 1988, tells us when the papers were deposited.

Though Kabir was silent on the date, the National Archives and the National Library have a record of it. Replying to a query by the present writer, the Director of the National Archives, Dr. R.K. Perti, states in a letter dated January 5, 1989: "We had received complete text of Maulana Azad's autobiography (1937-48) in a sealed cover for safe custody from Prof. Humayun Kabir, the then Minister of Civil Aviation, along with his letter dated 3 April 1958." In a letter to this writer dated February 21, 1989, Prof. A. Das Gupta, Director of the National Library, provides the information that the Library received the text "on 22.4.58".

The sealing and depositing was thus done after Azad's death. Kabir's Preface and Editor's Note conceal this fact. If Azad had instructed this exercise in or close to September 1957, why was it not carried out until April 1958? No explanation is offered either in Kabir's Preface or in his Editor's Note; in fact, as we have noted, Kabir does not tell us when he implemented Azad's supposed in-

struction.

At his February 7, 1959 Press Conference, Nehru was asked if he had seen the "missing" 30-page segment. He replied: "Not only have I not seen it, but I did not know anything about it till after Maulana's death."<sup>17</sup> When Masud was asked in 1973 whether the sealing of the 30 pages "was done on Maulana's advice" he replied:

"Maulana Saheb died on the morning of February 22. If he had been alive, there would not have been any question of not publishing a single page or a single line which he had approved of. Kabir Saheb, in consultation with Panditji, decided not to publish those thirty pages because Kabir Saheb thought that he would be held responsible for what Maulana Saheb had said in those 30 pages, and Kabir Saheb was then a Minister, and a politician. . . . That is why these 30 pages have been kept in our National Archives - this action or this decision had been taken by Kabir Saheb in full consultation with Panditji."<sup>18</sup>

The proof that the 30 pages were deposited after Azad's death suggests that Masud is right and Kabir wrong. Now exposed to light, the 30 pages do not contain anything markedly different from the rest of *IWF*. It is difficult to believe that Azad would have placed a 30-year ban on sentences or passages that do not vary from the rest in tone or content. If the "30 pages" contain "incidents and reflections mainly of a personal character", such incidents and reflections are precisely what the book as a whole abounds in. Nehru's answer (quoted above) to the question on the 30 pages also merits close study. Implying that he knew of them shortly after Maulana Azad's death, the reply tends to confirm the view that Nehru was privy, if not party, to Kabir's action of sealing and putting away the 30 pages.

We should note, moreover, that there are significant discrepancies in *IWF*'s 1959 and 1988 versions. The exercises of "leaving out" and "toning down" do not explain the changes in meaning and opinion, amounting in some cases to a reversal. Some of the discrepancies are discussed in the following pages. But the fact that they exist is relevant here and points to a role by Kabir that goes beyond that of an amanuensis-translator. That the 1988 version is more truly Azad's than the 1959 version - and that the 1959 version was influenced by Kabir - is suggested by four pieces of evidence. One is Nehru's testimony, already quoted, to the effect that Kabir was reluctant to see some of Azad's passages published. The second is Kabir's statement in his Editor's Note of 2 April 1958, published

as Appendix 1 in *IWF* 1988: "Even in respect of matter that has not been omitted, there are some minor differences from the original text. . . . This is due to the fact that the text for publication (*IWF* 1959) was revised several times, and. . . shows a toning down of his original judgment." (p. 251) The third is Kabir's comment in the Preface in *IWF* 1959: "I often expressed my differences to (Azad), and with the open-mindedness which was so strong an element in his nature, he has at times modified his views to meet my criticisms." (p.xiv) The dates when the papers were deposited constitute the fourth.

We are thus entitled to conclude that the 1959 version was modified by Kabir from the (earlier) text now available to us as *IWF* 1988. Despite Kabir's remark, the modification went beyond "toning down". As already pointed out, it resulted in some instances in a wholly different meaning. The need for the qualifying phrase "on the whole" in relation to Azad's authorship of *IWF* should now be clear. He is the author of *IWF* 1988; but *IWF* 1959 contains significant alterations for which Kabir is responsible.

The focus on the "30 suppressed pages" has blinded most people to the fact that *IWF* 1959 contains some material not found in *IWF* 1988. It is evident that after the "unexpurgated" text was sealed and stored, additions were made to the abridged and "safe" text. Some of these additions, consisting of texts of resolutions and letters, were only padding, designed to provide more pages to the book; but other additions were of a significant nature. This study looks also at such passages in *IWF* 1959.

Unable to speak English fluently, Azad chose not to speak at all in it. Hence his having to dictate *IWF* in Urdu. Masud explains: "The Maulana started learning English at a very late age. . . . When I started working with him in June 1948, I found that he could read books in English, he could read notes in English; but he would not speak. Because he did not speak (English) as much as he liked to, he did not speak it at all. If there was some visitor who did not know our language, (Azad) would need an interpreter. . . . But. . . his knowledge of English was quite adequate. . . . When we put our drafts to him, he would point out the mistakes very easily. His knowledge in that sense was adequate, but not so far as speaking was concerned."<sup>19</sup>

Chapters One to Six of this study contain the scrutiny. Within each chapter, sub-headings describe some of the individual state-

ments placed under the lens. In the main, the statements scrutinized in each chapter fall under the heading given to it. By and large they also belong to a common period. Since *IWF* is largely chronological, so is this attempt to check *IWF*'s facts. In addition to what its heading denotes, Chapter Seven tries to answer the obvious question: what made Azad perpetrate *IWF*'s palpable errors? The discovery that *IWF*'s errors are indeed numerous and serious is responsible for the title of this study.

It is but proper, while scrutinizing *IWF*, to remember how Azad and Kabir viewed it. According to both Kabir and Masud, *IWF* was a response to requests for Azad's autobiography - it was to be the story of Azad's life and times. Though *IWF* restricts itself (apart from a few diversions) to the years between 1935 and 1948, Azad had clearly hoped to write about earlier and later periods also. A complete autobiography was his plan, but his death intervened. The Maulana saw, says Kabir, that "as one of the principal actors in the transfer of power from British to Indian hands, he owed a duty to posterity to record his reading of those memorable times". (p. xi) The 1959 edition had a sub-title: "An Autobiographical Narrative". At no stage was *IWF* portrayed as Azad's Random Memories or a composition in that genre. It was and is presented as Azad's account of political India, 1935 to 1948, and of Azad's own role in that period.

Azad dedicated the book to "Jawaharlal Nehru, friend and comrade". According to Louis Fischer, who wrote an introduction to the 1960 American edition of *IWF*, it was Nehru who, after the Maulana's death, advised the title *India Wins Freedom*.<sup>20</sup>

Substantial (but by no means complete) power was conferred to elected provincial legislatures by the Government of India Act of 1935. Elections under this Act were held in the beginning of 1937. Congress won the great majority of the General or unreserved seats. A majority of the N.W.F.P.'s Muslim seats (there were reserved seats and a separate electorate for Muslims in 1937) were also won by Congress, and numerous Muslim seats in Punjab and Bengal went to regional parties, but Jinnah's Muslim League obtained an impressive number of Muslim seats in some of the provinces where Muslims were in a minority - the U.P., Bombay, Madras and Assam.

For a while Congress could not decide whether or not to accept office in the provinces where it had won a majority. Nehru, the party's President in 1936 and 1937, had campaigned against office-

10 / *India Wins Errors*

acceptance, which he seemed to view as a dishonourable compromise with the Raj. Patel, Rajagopalachari and Prasad stood, on the other hand, for office-acceptance. Azad kept his views to himself. In the end Gandhi threw his weight in favour of acceptance, and the party, including Nehru and Azad, went along with the decision. Patel, Azad and Prasad were named to a three-man committee of Congress charged with supervising Congress's legislature parties in the provinces.

Designated the committee's chairman, Patel was given specific charge of the provinces of Bombay, Madras, the C.P. and Sind. The U.P., Punjab, Bengal and the N.W.F.P. were placed in Azad's care, and Bihar, Orissa and Assam in Prasad's. In addition to the provinces assigned to him, Azad was entrusted with the question of Muslim representation in all the ministries formed by Congress. In some provinces Congress and the League had common foes, and in several instances, chiefly in the U.P., Congress workers had canvassed for League candidates. This had happened despite a public clash in January and February 1937 between Nehru and Jinnah. It is in this setting that Azad's *IWF* story, and our examination, begins.

## Chapter One

### *Congress, the Raj and Jinnah*

By the middle of July 1937, Congress had formed ministries in seven provinces - the U.P., Bihar, Bombay, Madras, Orissa, the C.P. and the N.W.F.P. A year later Congress was able to form a ministry in Assam as well. Azad makes three significant allegations in connection with these provincial ministries of Congress. One is that K.F. Nariman, a Parsi, was denied the Premiership (the expression then used) of Bombay presidency (as it was then called) because of Vallabhbhai Patel's communalism. The second is that Dr Syed Mahmud, a Muslim, was deprived of the Premiership of Bihar because of Rajendra Prasad's communalism. The third is that "an offensive which ultimately led to Pakistan" was triggered in the U.P. by an intervention by Jawaharlal Nehru that destroyed an agreement with the U.P.'s Muslim League that Azad had pulled off. The first two charges are made in Azad's opening chapter, "Congress in Office", and the third much later, but we will look at the three together. The charge against Patel is worded as follows:

*I have to admit with regret that both in Bihar and Bombay the Congress did not come out fully successful in its test of nationalism. Thus in Bombay Mr Nariman was the acknowledged leader of the local Congress. When the question of forming the provincial government arose, there was general expectation that Mr Nariman would be asked to lead it in view of his status and record. This however would have meant that a Parsee would be the Chief Minister while the majority of members in the Congress Assembly party were Hindus. Sardar Patel and his colleagues could not reconcile themselves to such a position. Accordingly, Mr B.G. Kher*

*was brought into the picture and elected leader. . . . We all knew that truth had been sacrificed to satisfy Sardar Patel's communal demands. Poor Nariman was heart-broken and his public life came to an end. (pp. 16-17)*

The Nariman episode of 1937 figures in many an account of the political events of 1937 and in several books on Sardar Patel. It is not necessary for our purposes to go into it at length. Those interested in its particulars can find them in Narhari Parikh's biography of Patel, in V.B. Kulkarni's *The Indian Triumvirate* and in the detailed report and findings of D.N. Bahadurji, the distinguished Parsi barrister who was asked, with Nariman's agreement, to go into the dispute. The undeniable facts are that Nariman had hoped to become the Premier, that Patel did not favour Nariman's aspiration and that Kher was chosen.

Contrary, however, to what Azad implies, Nariman was not the acknowledged leader of Bombay presidency's Congressmen. It is true that he led the city Congress, but the presidency was a much bigger entity, including much of today's Maharashtra, much of today's Gujarat and some of today's Karnataka. The Marathi, Gujarati and Kannada districts had their own acknowledged leaders, the counterparts of Bombay city's Nariman. Apart from being the city Congress's chief spokesman, Nariman was an able lawyer with lots of flair and with a record of standing up to the Raj. Yet his record also included an abrupt, last-minute withdrawal as a Congress candidate from the 1934 elections to the Central Assembly. Though K.M. Munshi was inducted in Nariman's place at the eleventh hour, Congress's opponent, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, won the 1934 election.

When, rather late in the day, Nariman sought Patel's backing for his 1937 aspiration, the Sardar frankly told Nariman that in view of the 1934 incident he could not offer it. While referring to Nariman's "status and record", Azad should have mentioned the 1934 incident. He should have also stated that though Nariman pressed an allegation that Patel had used undue influence to deny him the Premiership, he specifically and publicly exonerated Patel of the charge, proffered without proof by Azad, of communalism.<sup>1</sup> For Azad to revive a charge that the alleged victim had himself set aside - set aside, be it noted, at the peak of a campaign he was waging against Patel - is not worthy of the scholar in the Maulana.

There are other material facts of this case that Azad leaves out. He does not name Bahadurji, who with Nariman's and Patel's consent inquired into Nariman's allegation of undue pressure on the part of Patel and into Patel's counter-allegation that Nariman had let Congress down in 1934. After hearing both sides and examining a number of affidavits, Bahadurji, a former Advocate-General of the presidency, concluded that Nariman's charge was not proved, whereas Patel's was. While not spelling out Bahadurji's name, Azad writes: "Since Nariman was himself a Parsee, Sardar Patel and his friends suggested that a Parsee should be entrusted with the enquiry. They had planned their move carefully." (p. 17) The insinuation that Patel had selected the adjudicator implies that Gandhi, who had proposed to Nariman that his dispute with Patel be referred either to Sir Govind Madgaokar or Mr Bahadurji,<sup>2</sup> was also party to the setting up of a fake inquiry. In reality it was Gandhi, not Patel, who had thought of Bahadurji. And though Nariman had the option to express a preference for Madgaokar or propose another adjudicator, he accepted Bahadurji.

Also left out of Azad's account is the fact that in 1948 Nariman apologized to Patel for his 1937 allegations and was re-elected leader of Congress's group in the Bombay corporation. Contrary to what Azad says, Nariman's public life had not come to an end. When, soon afterwards, Nariman sadly died, Patel paid him a wholehearted tribute.

These facts were well within the Maulana's knowledge but he chose to exclude them from his narration. Deplorably, Azad also kept out the fact that he was party to a Working Committee resolution, passed in November 1937, barring Nariman from "positions of trust and responsibility in the Congress organisation". This resolution was the Working Committee's reaction to Nariman's strange behaviour in first accepting Bahadurji's verdict and then withdrawing his acceptance. Azad does not say in *IWF* that he was an unhappy or reluctant party to this resolution - the resolution is not even mentioned by him. But there is irrefutable evidence that he did not dissent from it;<sup>3</sup> and there is no suggestion anywhere that later in his life he questioned Patel's or the Working Committee's treatment of Nariman.

The 1959 and 1988 editions of *IWF* contain an important discrepancy in relation to the Nariman episode. The 1959 edition says: "Since Nariman was a Parsee and Kher a Hindu, this led to wide



speculation that Nariman had been by-passed on communal grounds. Even if it is not true, it is difficult to disprove such an allegation." The author of the 1959 edition thus saw the communalism charge as speculative and was unsure of its truth - "even if it is untrue" was his phrase. But the Azad of the 1988 edition has no doubts: "We all *knew* that truth had been sacrificed in order to satisfy Sardar Patel's communal demands." (p. 17) Truth has plainly been sacrificed in at least one of the versions.

Azad's treatment of Nehru's alleged role in the Nariman episode alters with the abridgement or the "toning down". Says *IWF* 1959: "Jawaharlal did not agree with Sardar Patel in many things but he did not also think that Sardar Patel would take a decision on communal considerations alone. He reacted somewhat unfavourably and rejected Nariman's appeal." (p. 15)

Compare the above with *IWF* 1988: "Jawaharlal knew that people looked upon him as a critic and opponent of Sardar Patel. . . .He therefore sought to placate Patel and rejected Nariman's appeal." (p. 17)

The truth differs from both. Nehru's stance was not "somewhat unfavourable" towards Nariman or "placatory" towards Patel. It was one of exasperation at Nariman's peculiar attitude and by its frequent shifts. On July 16, 1937 he wrote as follows to Nariman:

I find that you have again launched a fierce campaign. . . .I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not making any request to you to give up your request for an enquiry. So far as I am concerned, since the Working Committee does not unfortunately enjoy your confidence, you can go to the Privy Council or the League of Nations or any other tribunal in which you have confidence.<sup>4</sup>

In sum, there is a high ratio of imagination to fact in Azad's account of the Nariman episode; and the charge of communalism against Patel is not even partially proved.

## DR MAHMUD AND THE BIHAR PREMIERSHIP

According to *IWF*, Bombay's Nariman was not the only victim in 1937 of Congress's secret communalism. Dr Syed Mahmud, a resi-

dent of Bihar's Chhapra district, was another.

*A similar development took place in Bihar. Dr Syed Mahmud was the top leader of the province when the elections were held. He was also a General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee. . . . When the Congress secured an absolute majority in Bihar, it was taken for granted that Dr Syed Mahmud would be elected the leader and become the first Chief Minister of Bihar under provincial autonomy. Instead, Sri Krishna Sinha and Anugraha Narayan Sinha, who were members of the Central Assembly, were called back to Bihar and groomed for the Chief Ministership.*

*Dr Rajendra Prasad played the same role in Bihar as Sardar Patel did in Bombay. One has to admit with regret that the nationalism of Congress had not then reached a stage where it could ignore communal considerations and select leaders on the basis of merit.*  
(pp. 17-18)

Who took for granted that Syed Mahmud would be elected the leader of the Bihar Assembly Congress party in 1937? There is no evidence that even Syed Mahmud did. The book of Mahmud's correspondence<sup>5</sup> contains no mention whatever of the possibility or even a hope of that sort. The volumes relating to 1937 in the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (CWMG), the *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (SWJN) and *Rajendra Prasad's Correspondence* (RPC) contain numerous references to Syed Mahmud but none to his supposed chance of becoming Bihar's Premier. The Syed Mahmud Papers preserved in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) include interesting letters written by Nehru to Mahmud in January, February, May and June of 1937. In no letter, however, is there any reference either to Mahmud's hope of becoming a Premier or to his disappointment in not becoming one. The Syed Mahmud Papers also contain letters from Gandhi to Mahmud in 1937; these too are silent about the alleged prospect of Premiership.

The Raj's representatives in Bihar were expected to keep Delhi informed of trends in the provincial Congress's thinking. The Acting Governor of Bihar, T.A. Stewart, wrote as follows to Lord Brabourne, the Acting Viceroy:

"When on the advent of the new constitution, the provincial Congress party was faced with selecting a leader, there was considerable

feeling. . . . as to whether the choice should fall on Sri Krishna Sinha or on Anugraha Narayan Sinha."<sup>6</sup>

Syed Mahmud, who, it may be mentioned, was born in the U.P. and not in Bihar, did not seem to be in the running at all. The charge that Rajendra Prasad played a communal role in depriving Mahmud of the Premiership thus falls to the ground. The exercise of keeping Mahmud away from the Premiership needed no role, communal or otherwise, from anyone, for Mahmud was never near it.

Privately Mahmud did nurse a hope. But his chances were tiny. Echoing Stewart's assessment, Prasad wrote in his *Autobiography* (pp. 437-8) that "the consensus of opinion favoured the election of either S.K. Sinha or A.N. Sinha". According to Prasad's *Autobiography*, which was published in Hindi in 1946 and in English in 1957 but never challenged by the Maulana, Mahmud was ruled out because "he was not so well-known" in Bihar - "he had been working outside the province". Nonetheless, recalls Prasad, there was "a feeling of bitterness among Muslims, particularly among non-Congress Muslims, . . . that Dr Syed Mahmud was ignored only because of his being a Muslim". Some "distinguished compainants", to go on with Prasad's uncontested version, went to Azad in 1937. What did the Maulana do?

"He retorted...that had he been in my place perhaps his decision too would have been the same." (*Autobiography*, p. 438) The charge levelled in *IWF* 1988 is thus one that Azad had himself refuted in 1937.

A contemporary of Jawaharlal's at Cambridge, Syed Mahmud rose to become an eminent nationalist Muslim. Azad refers in *IWF* to the unfortunate episode of a letter of apology from Mahmud to the Viceroy that fetched Mahmud's release in 1944<sup>7</sup> and also to a charge by Mahmud in 1945 to the effect that Azad had personally blocked a Congress-League agreement during the Simla talks earlier that year. The charge against Azad was obviously baseless. Even so, says Azad, he decided to include Mahmud's name in the Bihar ministry formed in 1946:

\* After reacting to this letter with expletives, Nehru added in his diary: "Not even the youngest and most immature of our volunteers could have acted thus."

*I had regretted his apology to the Viceroy and also his statement against me but I made allowances for his weakness. In any case I had made up my mind that merit alone should be the only consideration in the formation of the Government. . . .Dr Syed Mahmud was visibly surprised and pleased to find his name in the list.* (p. 136)

That Dr Mahmud possessed many a merit to become a Bihar Minister may be readily allowed. Yet *IWF* does not refer to any them. It speaks only of the sad 1944 incident and of the unfounded allegation against Azad. *IWF*'s passages dealing with Dr Mahmud show that Azad was capable of being magnanimous towards one who had betrayed the side or turned critical. But they do not show that Azad was rewarding merit. Wanting to prove that Mahmud lost the Premiership in 1937 because he was not a Hindu, Azad succeeds only in conveying the impression that Mahmud gained the Ministership in 1946 only because he was a Muslim! Such an impression would not have been conveyed if Azad had touched on some of Mahmud's merits.

But the conclusive comment on Congress communalism during the late thirties was given by Azad himself. This comment can be seen in File G 32 of 1940 in the AICC Papers preserved in the Nehru Library. It was made during a session of the Working Committee held in Wardha from April 16 to 19, 1940, in the form of a reply to Syed Mahmud and Asaf Ali, who had both spoken of "Hindu revivalism". The minutes read:

"From personal experience in the Parliamentary Sub-Committee (the Patel-Azad-Prasad committee), he (Azad) could say that there was no injustice done to Muslims as such by any Congress Ministry. There may be cases of individual injustice but that was not due to communal reasons."

### NEHRU'S 1937 "BLUNDER"

*"The first time that he (Nehru) did immense harm to the national cause."* (p. 170) This is Azad's verdict on Nehru's supposed role in killing the 1937 negotiations for a Congress-League understanding in the U.P. We will look first at the broad facts of the episode and note the documents where, from a variety of angles, the subject has been

discussed. Then we will spell out Azad's charge against Nehru and examine its validity.

Muslim seats in all the provincial legislatures of 1937 totalled 482. Of these only 109 were won by the League - 39 in Bengal, 9 in Assam, 10 in Madras, 1 in Punjab, 3 in Sind, 20 in Bombay and 27 in the U.P. Congress contested just 58 of the 482 Muslim seats and won only 26, most of them in the N.W.F.P. Though two Congress Muslims were elected in the U.P. from General seats, not one of the 9 Congress Muslims standing from Muslim seats could be elected. The League had performed remarkably poorly in three Muslim-majority provinces, Punjab, Sind and the N.W.F.P., and its performance in Bengal, though a lot better, was not outstanding. Yet it had fared conspicuously well in four Muslim-minority provinces - Assam, Madras, Bombay and the U.P.

The League was not, in the spring and summer of 1937, the cohesive body it later became. Its U.P. unit, for instance, was apt to act autonomously, and Jinnah was yet to acquire unquestioned authority over all provincial units. Several of the leaders of the U.P. League were ex-Congressmen with memories of the Khilafat movement in which Hindus and Muslims had jointly worked. Congress saw the landlord-dominated National Agriculturist Party as its chief foe in the U.P., not the League. The manifestos of Congress and the League were similar. Many Congressmen had canvassed for League candidates; and before, during and immediately after the 1937 elections there was talk in U.P.'s political circles of a possible Congress-League understanding which could result, if Congress were to accept office, in a share for the League in the U.P. ministry.

Choudhry Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan, the leaders of the U.P. League, clearly hoped for such a share. Congress circles had welcomed the former's rejection of an invitation to join an interim ministry of the Raj's loyalists that was installed while Congress debated whether or not to accept office. Hopes of an understanding had survived a sharp Nehru-Jinnah clash that had taken place in January and February 1937. Only two forces mattered in India, Nehru said in January - imperialism and nationalism, the later represented by Congress. "I refuse to line up," Jinnah replied, adding, "There is a third force - the Muslims."<sup>8</sup> Nehru claimed that "there were Muslims in Congress who could provide inspiration to a thousand Jinnahs," and Jinnah spoke of Nehru as the Peter Pan who refused to grow up.<sup>9</sup>

Despite this slanging match, talks for a Congress-League understanding in the U.P. took place from March to July. Jinnah, as we have noted, was not yet the League's undisputed chief, and some of the U.P. League's leaders was ready to break away from him. On their part, many Congressmen in the U.P. realized that a Congress-League understanding would deprive the Raj of its favourite excuse for postponing political progress, the Muslims' alleged fear of Congress rule.

But the talks failed and bitterness between the Congress and League, and between Hindus and Muslims, increased. Khaliquzzaman, the chief negotiator on behalf of the U.P. League, has left behind his account of what happened in his *Pathway to Pakistan*. A seven-page letter dated July 21, 1937 from Nehru to Rajendra Prasad published in *Rajendra Prasad's Correspondence* (Vol. 1), devotes itself almost wholly to the U.P. negotiations and provides valuable information. Several other details can be found in the article "The Congress and the Partition of India" by S.R. Mehrotra in the volume *The Partition of India*, edited by Philips and Wainwright. Munshi's *Pilgrimage to Freedom* gives interesting information on parallel talks, briefer and also unsuccessful, that took place for a Congress-League agreement in Bombay. Though objecting to Khaliquzzaman's bid in the U.P., Jinnah had initiated the Bombay discussions.

Azad's story in *IWF* is as follows. He launched the effort for an agreement in the U.P. On his persuasion, Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan agreed that the U.P. League "would not only cooperate with the Congress but would fully support the Congress programme". A document stating this was, according to Azad, signed by both Ismail Khan and Khaliquzzaman, and Azad on his part "held out hopes that both would be taken into the Government". Shortly thereafter, however, and while Azad was away in Bihar, Nehru wrote to the two leaders of the U.P. League "that only one of them could be taken into the Ministry". This killed the talks. (pp. 170-71)

*Jawaharlal's action gave the Muslim League in the U.P. a new lease of life. All students of Indian politics know that it was from the UP that the League was reorganised. Mr Jinnah took full advantage of the situation and started an offensive which ultimately led to Pakistan.* (p. 171)

Did Azad initiate the talks? In his letter to Prasad of July 21 Nehru refers to the moves for a Congress-League understanding that had begun in March and to talks that Khaliquzzaman and Ismail Khan had had in June with Govind Ballabh Pant, who became the U.P. Premier in July. Then Nehru adds: "I knew nothing about all this, nor did Maulana, till it was vaguely hinted at early this month by Pantji." No doubt Azad was the Congress leader "in charge" of the U.P., and no doubt Muslim representation in all provincial ministries was his portfolio; but the U.P. talks were begun without him.

By the second week of July, however, Azad had taken charge of the talks. But there is no evidence in any of the studies cited above or in *IWF* or, as far as the present writer is aware, anywhere else of the document that, according to Azad, Khaliquzzaman and Ismail Khan had "signed". There is no trace, similarly, of the letter that, according to Azad, Nehru wrote to the two Leaguers. When he was asked in February 1959 about the "document" supposedly "signed" by the two Leaguers, Nehru replied that, speaking from memory, he was not aware of any signature.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the letter from Nehru to Prasad shows that though Nehru wanted the League to accept several stiff conditions, he was prepared to accept two Leaguers in the U.P. ministry.

"We came to the conclusion that we should offer stringent conditions to the U.P. Muslim League group and if they accepted them in toto then we would agree to two ministers from their group. Besides them one minister would be Rafi Ahmed Kidwai."

Nehru's letter makes it clear that the "we" in the above quote consisted of Nehru, Azad, Pant, Kripalani and Narendra Deva. Their conditions were not accepted and the talks collapsed. Though Nehru's biographer S. Gopal holds that "no weighty consequences" followed the failure of the U.P. talks (Gopal, *Nehru*, Vol. 1, p. 229), others have expressed a contrary view. Khaliquzzaman's account speaks of the personal trauma caused by the failure of the talks and of his decision, sparked by the failure, to promote "downright opposition to Congress" and project Jinnah as the Muslims' rallying point.<sup>11</sup>

The following assessment of a U.P. Congressman, Chaturbhuj Sharma, represents more than one man's opinion: "Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan had stood as League candidates on the advice of Congress. In our district we mobilised votes for League candidates. Congress got an unexpected majority. Some Congressmen

20675

started talk that the Muslim League should not be taken into the ministry and that Congress alone should form the Government. . . . If there had been a joint ministry Pakistan could have been avoided. The incident intensified bitterness and communalism."<sup>12</sup>

We may note also the appraisal of Gandhi's secretary and biographer, Pyarelal, which includes a reference to the Mahatma's view:

"And so the Congress Ministries were formed without the Muslim League. This decision of the Congress High Command taken against Gandhi's best judgment proved to be a tactical error of the first magnitude."<sup>13</sup>

An opposite conclusion is drawn by K.M. Munshi. While not holding that the U.P. (and Bombay) talks were of minor importance, Munshi thinks that the exclusion of the League was necessary. According to him, the League's ministers would have been "at the disposal of Jinnah to obstruct, defy or sabotage and, by using a veto, blackmail the Congress into submission".<sup>14</sup> In Munshi's view, Congress-League coalitions in the late thirties would have invited the unworkability that the 1946-47 Congress-League Interim Government experienced. This opinion fails, however, to take into account the 1937 readiness of the U.P. League to bypass Jinnah.

All in all, Azad is right in attaching importance to the U.P. talks and to their failure. He is not alone, we have noted, in doing this. Before *IWF* appeared, several authors had argued that Congress's refusal to give a place to the League in the 1937 ministries had turned the Muslims towards Pakistan. (See P.J. Griffiths, *British Impact on India*, London, 1952; C.H. Philips, *India*, London, 1949; Frank Moraes, *Nehru*, New York, 1956; and Beni Prasad, *The Hindu-Muslim Questions*, 1946.) Where Azad is wholly wrong is in his explanation of the talks' failure. They failed not because Nehru intervened unexpectedly and behind Azad's back and cut Congress's offer from two seats to one. Nehru does not appear to have done any such thing. We may allow that he was unenthusiastic about two places for the League. But we have seen that in the end he was ready for it.

Azad would have been on the mark if he had said that many U.P. Congressmen were opposed to two Cabinet berths for the League. Since Nehru was committed to a place for Rafi Kidwai, a Congress Muslim, two berths for the League would have resulted in three Muslims in a cabinet of six. According to Khaliquzzaman, he had told Pant early on in the negotiations that the League would expect one-third of the seats in the cabinet, "three in nine or two in six".<sup>15</sup> A



fair proportion of U.P.'s Congressmen disliked the idea of Muslims holding half or virtually half the places in the cabinet.<sup>16</sup>

In Khaliquzzaman's view, the U.P. talks failed for two reasons. One was that Azad wanted him to "sign the death warrant of the Muslim League Parliamentary Board". The other was that "under the guidance of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad", an important constituent of the U.P. League, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, had left the League "and unconditionally joined the Congress" on May 17, 1937, making Congressmen less eager to woo the remaining Leaguers.<sup>17</sup> Khaliquzzaman thus holds Azad squarely responsible for the U.P. failure. Nehru's letter to Prasad confirms the truth of Khaliquzzaman's first charge. Khaliquzzaman would not agree, Nehru wrote, to "the winding up of the (League) Parliamentary Board".

Azad, Patel and Nehru were at one in wanting the U.P. League to lose its separate identity, and this seems to be the real explanation for the failure of the talks. After noting, in his letter to Prasad, the problems that an accord with the U.P. Leaguers would create, Nehru adds:

"And yet the alternative was worth having if it could be secured. This was the winding up of the Muslim League group in the U.P. and its absorption in the Congress. This would have a great effect not only in U.P. but all over India and even outside. This would mean a free field for our work without communal troubles. This would knock over the British Government which relied so much on these troubles."

The accounts of Nehru and Khaliquzzaman agree that Congress's stringent conditions were conveyed to the U.P. League by Azad and Pant. It was not any letter from Nehru to Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan but rather the note that Azad and Pant handed over to the two Leaguers that finished the talks. Khaliquzzaman reproduces the note in his book and Nehru paraphrases it in his letter to Prasad. Yet Azad makes no reference in *IWF* either to the note or to his demand for the winding up of the League Parliamentary Board.

Further corroboration of Azad wanting the League MLAs to merge with Congress in the event of a coalition, a condition unacceptable to the League, comes from the account of the Bombay presidency talks, given by Munshi, who became a minister in the Bombay cabinet.

"After the elections were over and the Congress had agreed to

accept office, Jinnah told me that 'we' (Congress and the Muslim League) should work together. I promised to convey his wishes to the Sardar and Gandhiji, which I did. After we were sworn in, Sir Cowasji Jehangir formally approached Sardar and the Maulana on Jinnah's behalf. At that time both of them were my guests in Poona, and Kher (who became the Bombay Premier) and myself were present when the discussions took place.

"The League wanted two Muslim ministers in the Bombay cabinet; when appointed they would not join the Congress nor accept its discipline. . . . Both Sardar and Maulana could not entertain this demand."<sup>18</sup>

The U.P. League was agreeable, Nehru told Prasad, to its MLAs joining the Congress legislature party. But Jinnah was opposed to any such condition in Bombay. There was no prospect of the Bombay talks succeeding. *IWF* makes no mention of the Bombay talks or of Azad's participation in them.

The foregoing makes it plain that Azad is not true to history in his account of the Congress-League talks. His picture of Nehru's "blunder" is not drawn from facts, and he is silent about his own insistence on an end to the League's separate identity. That Nehru and Patel shared this insistence may be conceded. But Azad was not justified in suppressing it.

Apart from being untrue and incomplete in its particulars, Azad's account of the 1937 talks is also grossly simplistic. It is inconceivable that one impolitic letter shot off by Nehru (even if it had been sent, which it was not) could have irretrievably changed the future. Azad's appraisal has no place for the more complex, and more important, factors that were at work. Thus Congress Hindus were opposed to a disproportionate share being given to the League. Congress Muslims, their loyalty proved in difficult times, hated the idea of being upstaged by the League. The Jamiat Muslims, members of Congress from May 1937, would have been restive if the League, coming in later, had obtained two Cabinet seats. So also the leftist Muslims, whose sympathies were with Congress and against the League, which they viewed as pro-feudal.

Nor was it easy for the U.P. Leaguers to agree to an extinction of their party. Moreover, Jinnah would not have acquiesced silently in a Congress-League deal settled behind his back. These and other problems are excluded from Azad's account.

Azad's story of the 1937 talks ends as follows:

*I tried to persuade Jawaharlal to modify his stand. I told him that he had made a great mistake in not bringing the League into the ministry. I also warned him that the result of his action would be to create a new life in the Muslim League. Jawaharlal did not agree with me. . . .He argued that the Muslim League could not claim more than one seat in the Cabinet. (pp. 171-2)*

We know that that was not Nehru's argument. Nehru wanted the U.P. League to wind up. Azad wanted the same. It is unlikely that the conversation described in the preceding paragraph took place.

Azad and Nehru used to meet almost every evening during the last ten years of Azad's life. If the Maulana considered Nehru's 1937 "intervention" a "blunder" that "harmed the national cause", would he not have mentioned it to Jawaharlal in the course of one of those countless evenings? When *IWF* came out, Nehru was asked about Azad's appraisal of his 1937 "blunder". "He never referred to it during these last ten years," replied Jawaharlal.<sup>19</sup>

## *Chapter Two*

### *The War Destroys an Equilibrium*

The functioning of eight Congress ministries signified a compact and an equilibrium between Congress and the Raj. The compact was qualified, Congress hoping to use it to weaken the Raj at the Centre as well, and the Raj hoping that the burdens and blessings of office would moderate Congress's demand of complete independence. And the equilibrium was not fully stable. Hindus predominating in Congress's ministries, Muslims were prone to believe Jinnah's accusations, increasingly strident and persistent from the last quarter of 1937, that Hindu Raj had been established. Led by Subhas Bose, a section of Congressmen too were unhappy about the compact, viewing it as a compromise with imperialism. Yet the compact and the equilibrium lasted until September 1939 and would have extended beyond that period but for Hitler's War.

Making Indians more impatient and Britons less generous, the War destroyed the compact and the equilibrium. Though well aware of the evil in Hitler, political India refused to back the alien ruler's War without an immediate increase in self-government. For Britain, on the other hand, winning the War became the sole objective; everything else, including political advance in India, was to be put off until normalcy. Congress stood to inherit the Raj but alienate the *Praja* - the Indian people - if it went along with Britain. If, for the sake of its standing with the masses, Congress broke its compact with Britain, it would lose both provincial power and the prospect of taking over the Raj's authority in New Delhi. In Congress's dilemma Jinnah saw his chance.

"There was going to be a deal," Jinnah would later recall, "between Mr Gandhi and Lord Linlithgow. Providence helped us.

The War which nobody welcomes proved to be a blessing in disguise."<sup>1</sup>

Azad's account of Congress's response to the difficult choices posed by the War is selective, misleading and inaccurate. His line, repeated several times in *IWF*, that for Gandhi "the issue was one of pacifism and not of India's freedom" (p. 31) is untrue to the facts. Azad's portrayal of the 1939 scene (pp. 26-28) also suggests that, opposed to all war, the Mahatma was morally neutral between the Allies and the Axis powers. This is a wholly false impression and its falsity would have been plain had Azad not excluded from his coverage Gandhi's declaration at the start of the War that his unconditional support and preference lay with the Allies. As Azad and everyone else knew at the time, Gandhi had made this declaration both in public and in his meeting, immediately after the start of the War, with Viceroy Linlithgow.

The Working Committee found itself unable to adopt Gandhi's line. Nehru, Azad and Patel felt that Congress's support had to be linked to self-government at the Centre. This difference between Gandhi and the Working Committee during the early days of the War finds no mention in Azad's account. Congress's ministries resigned when the Raj said that it could not accede to the Working Committee's demand, and Jinnah asked all Muslims to celebrate Deliverance Day. (*IWF* is silent about these facts as well.)

The Maulana is quite right, however, in saying that in 1940 Gandhi felt hindered by his belief in non-violence from endorsing Congress's offer of participation in the War in exchange for a declaration by Britain of Indian independence. Yet opposition to violence was not the sole or even the primary reason for Gandhi's stand. A three-hour talk with Linlithgow in June 1940 had convinced him that Britain was not going to act handsomely by India; and Gandhi had also smelt a Raj-League understanding to foil Congress.<sup>2</sup> Omitting a mention of these considerations, Azad's account of Gandhi's attitude to the War and to Britain is so selective that the result is a complete distortion.

### WHO AUTHORED THE POONA OFFER?

*IWF*'s claim that Azad was the initiator of Congress's "Poona offer" or the "July 1940 offer", as it was variously called, is unfounded.

After referring, on page 33, to the possibility that "*the AICC would readily accept my proposal that India would participate in the war if her freedom was recognised*," Azad goes on to note, quite correctly, that in July 1940 the AICC resolved in favour of this view. "*The Committee endorsed my views*," he adds. (p. 36)

Yet the resolution and the effort in its favour was, in the main, Rajaji's. Azad gave it valuable support and so, to everyone's surprise, did Patel, but credit or blame for the Poona offer should go to C.R., not to Azad. "Rajaji was the framer of the resolution," Gandhi noted, adding that Patel was "Rajaji's greatest prize".<sup>3</sup> Angered by Congress's 1940 offer, Jayaprakash Narayan, who was in jail, exhorted Nehru in the following terms:

"Rajaji has stabbed us in the back. . . . You should resign your seat on the Working Committee. After a settlement, i.e. if it comes about, you should leave the Congress."<sup>4</sup>

Though in *IWF* Azad refers to the Poona resolution as "my draft" and "my proposal" (*both on p. 33*), he had spoken differently in 1940. File G 32 of 1940 in the AICC Papers minutes Azad's remark before the AICC on September 15, 1940, after Britain had rejected the Poona offer: "The very people, particularly Mr Rajagopalachari, who were responsible for the Poona decision, were the first today to scrap that decision."

### LINLITHGOW "TAKEN ABACK"

"*Soon after this*," Azad writes on page 35, and the preceding para makes it clear that "this" was August 1940, "*Gandhiji met Lord Linlithgow and pressed him to accept his point of view that the British people should give up arms and oppose Hitler with spiritual force. Lord Linlithgow was taken aback by what he regarded as an extraordinary suggestion. It was normally his practice to ring the bell for an ADC to come and take Gandhiji to his car. On this occasion he was so surprised that he neither rang the bell nor said goodbye*".

This is an interesting tale. But is it a true one? Gandhi did meet Linlithgow soon after August 1940 - on September 27 and again on September 30. Each meeting was followed by an exchange of letters recapitulating their discussion. These letters can be found in *CWMG* 73, pp. 71-73 and pp. 450-51. None of them makes any mention of the suggestion that, according to Azad, Gandhi made to the Viceroy.

It does not figure in any letter from Gandhi to anyone else either. No doubt there were occasions when the Mahatma made appeals to the British of the kind Azad has referred to, but this did not happen at the time or in the place or manner claimed by Azad.

What Gandhi discussed with Linlithgow towards the end of September 1940 was "the breach" (the phrase Gandhi used at the time) that had occurred between Congress and the Raj, following Britain's rejection of the Poona Offer, and Congress's consequent plan of individual civil disobedience. Apart from the letters that he wrote to Gandhi after their talks, Linlithgow also described his meetings with Gandhi to HMG's Secretary of State in London. These descriptions too make no reference to the colourful picture of a stunned Linlithgow presented to us by Azad.<sup>5</sup>

As for the statement that Linlithgow did not manage to say goodbye, interestingly enough we have it on record that he did. Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy of September 30 says: "Our personal friendship will, as you kindly said *at the time of saying farewell*, bear the strain of divergence."<sup>6</sup>

Azad's account of Gandhi's end-September meetings with Linlithgow makes no mention of the subject matter of the talks, the breach between Congress and the Raj. Searching for a way of opposing the British without seriously embarrassing the war effort, Congress came up with the idea of individual rather than mass civil disobedience. The scheme of disciplined disobedience by a number of selected persons was first proposed, it would seem, by Vallabhbhai Patel,<sup>7</sup> but Gandhi wholeheartedly adopted it and it is associated with his name. From end-1940 it marked the Indian scene for a year. Sadly the Azad of *IWF* tries to take credit for it: "*In fact it was with the greatest difficulty that I could persuade him (Gandhi) to agree to the individual satyagraha or civil disobedience movement.*" (p. 73)

The statement contradicts, and is less truthful than, Azad's earlier remark in *IWF*: "*When the British refused the Congress offer of cooperation, Gandhiji thought of a limited civil disobedience.*" (p. 35)

### AZAD BECOMES PRESIDENT

Early in 1940 Azad had become Congress President. This was not the first time that he had attained the honour. In September 1923, when he was only 35, he had presided over a Congress session held

in Delhi. In *IWF* Azad refers to his election as President in 1940 and says quite truthfully that "*there was no real contest. . . .The candidate who stood against me was defeated by an overwhelming majority.*" (p. 29) One wishes, however, that Azad had named the luckless yet illustrious candidate who lost against him - M.N. Roy. Azad's assumption of the Presidency coincided with the League's decision, embodied in its Lahore resolution, to strive for a separate Muslim homeland.

Azad also says, again entirely factually, that he had been "*pressed to accept the office the previous year*" as well. (p. 29) Yet he does not explain his statement that he "had for various reasons" declined the opportunity in 1939. This cryptic remark conceals the fact that at first Azad had agreed to the suggestion of Gandhi and Patel that he should stand in 1939 in opposition of Subhas Bose. Within days of his agreeing, however, Azad withdrew from the contest, leaving it to Pattabhi Sitaramayya, who had been proposed by the Andhra Congress, to compete with Subhas. Pattabhi would have vacated the field had Azad remained in it. In the event, Subhas defeated Pattabhi, despite the support the latter received from Gandhi, Patel and others. Azad's account of his change of mind in 1939 would have been of interest. Pattabhi's version is given in his *History of Congress*, Vol. 2, p. 105.

#### THE "OPTIMIST" OF JANUARY 1942

Whether or not he originated the idea of individual satyagraha, Azad certainly took a prominent part in it. Arrested towards the end of 1940, he was set free after a year's detention and continued as Congress President.

*Immediately after my release (says Azad on page 38), I called a meeting of the Working Committee at Bardoli. Gandhiji was staying there and had expressed a wish that the meeting might be held there. I went to meet Gandhiji and felt that we had moved further apart. . . .Now there was also a basic difference between his reading of the situation and mine. Gandhiji now seemed convinced that the British Government was ready and willing to recognize India as free if India offered full cooperation in the war effort.*



This was not Gandhi's reading at all! In fact if anyone thought at this point that the British might make a fair settlement with Congress it was Rajaji - and Azad! Thanks to the two of them, and despite the opposition of Patel and Prasad and the partial opposition of Nehru, the AICC made another offer, in January 1942, of cooperation with the Allies if India's independence was declared.<sup>8</sup> Publicly expressing his lack of optimism at the releases that had taken place at the end of 1941, Gandhi told the AICC meeting in January that "nothing much is to be expected from the Government".<sup>9</sup>

### SUBHAS BOSE'S ESCAPE

Directed by a Congress plenary to appoint a Working Committee "in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji", Subhas Bose had resigned his 1939 Presidency within months of winning it. Later, in August 1939, following his defiance of rulings of the high command, he was removed from the presidentship of the Bengal provincial Congress committee and disqualified for three years from Congress's elective offices. Viewing the War as a quarrel between rival imperialists, Subhas was in favour of exploiting Britain's difficulties. The Raj detained him in July 1940. Some months later, however, he escaped from custody.

*I also saw (Azad says on page 40) that Subhas Bose's escape to Germany had made a great impression of Gandhiji. He had not formerly approved many of his actions, but now I found a change in his outlook. Many of his remarks convinced me that he admired the courage and resourcefulness Subhas Bose had displayed in making his escape from India. . . . This admiration was one of the factors which clouded the discussion during the Cripps Mission to India.*

Cripps was in India in March-April 1942. According to Azad, a report, subsequently found to have been false, that Subhas had died in an air-crash reached India during Cripps's stay and evoked a message of sympathy from Gandhi in which the latter "spoke in glowing terms" about Subhas. Azad quotes without comment and with apparent approbation a complaint that Cripps is supposed to have

made. Cripps evidently said that "he had not expected a man like Gandhiji, a confirmed believer in non-violence, to speak in such glowing terms about Subhas Bose who had openly sided with the Axis powers". (p. 40) For Azad to share a feeling of surprise at Gandhi's admiration for Subhas's courage and resourcefulness is, well, surprising.

## THE CHIANGS AND THE TAJ

The Cripps Mission was preceded by a visit to India by Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. They had hoped to reduce the mistrust between Congress and Britain and thereby make India more of an ally of China (which Chiang was ruling at the time) in her struggle against Japan. Gandhi, Azad and Nehru met the Chiangs, as did Linlithgow, but the Chiangs did not attain their objective.

*The Generalissimo had expressed a wish (says Azad on page 44) to see the Taj. The Government had made a programme for an official visit when he would be accompanied by persons chosen by the Government. Madame Chiang Kai-shek however said that Jawaharlal should accompany them to Agra. He thus became a member of the party. This also was thoroughly disliked by the Government of India.*

But did Nehru in fact accompany the Chiangs to Agra? Rammanohar Lohia, who was close to Nehru in early 1942, wrote in 1960 that

the present Prime Minister of India (Nehru) was standing on his head on the lawns of the Kutub for the benefit of the Chinese Foreign Minister and his party when the Chiangs were away in Agra seeing the Taj Mahal.<sup>10</sup>

A study of newspaper files of February 1942 confirms that Azad is wrong about Nehru's visit to Agra. Jawaharlal's sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit gave company to Madame Chiang there, but

Nehru did not go.

### CRIPPS'S PACKAGE

Cripps's visit to India had been triggered by the fall of Rangoon to the Japanese. Hong Kong, Malaya and Singapore had fallen earlier. On behalf of HMG, Cripps (a member of the British Cabinet) offered India full dominion status after the war, with the right to leave the Commonwealth; a post-war Constituent Assembly filled by nominees of provincial legislatures and of the Princes; and, immediately, a national government composed of representatives of the leading parties. To secure Jinnah's acceptance of the package, Cripps also offered every province the right to secede from the dominion, once the latter had come into being.

Congress and the League both turned down the package. Britain's readiness to divide India offended Gandhi. Azad and Nehru, Congress's negotiators, rejected the proposals because the national government would be subject to the Viceroy's veto and because Defence was going to remain a British preserve. Though welcoming the secession clause as a "recognition of Pakistan by implication", Jinnah complained that Cripps's scheme gave provinces and not "the Muslim nation" the right to secede. It became clear later that Jinnah wanted secession to be decided by a vote of all the Muslims of a Muslim-majority province, rather than by a vote of its entire adult population.

Azad seemed more concerned about Indians having "effective control of Defence" than about the secession clause.<sup>11</sup> Cripps thought that Azad and Nehru would appreciate better the difficulties in a transfer of Defence to Indian hands if they met the Commander-in-Chief, General Wavell. The meeting took place on April 4, 1942. Recounts Azad:

*Cripps personally took Jawaharlal and me to Wavell but after a formal introduction he left us and we talked with Wavell for over an hour. Nothing however emerged from these discussions. . . .Wavell spoke more like a politician rather than like a soldier and insisted that during the war strategic considerations must take precedence over all other issues. I did not deny this but pointed out that our concern was as to who would exercise power in the administration*

*of India.*

*As a result of our insistence it had been proposed that one of the members of the Executive Council would deal with the problems of the war...When I asked Wavell if the role of Indian Member would be that of a responsible Cabinet Minister, he could give no direct reply. The conclusion I drew from my talk with him was that the Indian Member would have responsibility but no power. He would be in charge of Canteens, Commissariat and Transport but would have little say about the fighting forces. (p. 59)*

Another account of the same interview has been provided by General G.N. Molesworth, who was apparently present:

"When tea was cleared away, Wavell asked the Indian leaders to open proceedings, and Pandit Nehru spoke for some time. Briefly he wanted the Defence Member to be an Indian in place of the Commander-in-Chief, who would become an executive adviser.... When he had finished, I imagined that some discussions, and perhaps bargaining, would take place. . . .To my intense astonishment, Wavell said, 'If that is your case, there is nothing more to be said.' There was dead silence. After a pause Wavell stood up and the Indian leaders rose to take their leave."<sup>12</sup>

Azad's version has him and Wavell talking, and Nehru remaining silent. The other account has Nehru doing most of the talking, with Wavell uttering only one sentence and Azad none! We do not know whose recollection is more factual but at least both agree that the talk was fruitless. So was the mission of Cripps as a whole.

## *Chapter Three*

### *Quit India and its Sequel*

As everyone knows, the failure of the Cripps mission was followed by the Quit India movement. Most students of the period also know that Gandhi's first move in connection with Quit India was a draft resolution he sent to the Working Committee that was meeting in Allahabad, under Azad's presidentship, at the end of April 1942. Though this draft did not use the expression Quit India, it asked the British to "withdraw from India". The texts of this draft, of Prasad's revision of it and Nehru's alternative to it are available and on record. Also on record is a report of the discussion in the Working Committee on the drafts. The drafts and the report were seized in a raid by the Raj and published. During the discussion Azad said: "What is our position? Shall we tell the British Government to go?" A little later the Maulana also said: "Gandhiji's prescription is the only alternative though I doubt its effectiveness."<sup>1</sup>

Prasad's version of Gandhi's draft was passed by the Working Committee on April 30 but Azad asked for its withdrawal.<sup>2</sup> When it was pointed out to him that he had not objected to its passage, Azad's reply, as reported by Kripalani, who was present, "was that unless it was changed he would resign".<sup>3</sup> The diary of Sardar Patel's daughter Maniben, who was a witness to this session of the Working Committee, records that Prasad "succumbed" to Azad's pressure.<sup>4</sup> Yielding to Azad, the Working Committee substituted Nehru's milder alternative. The episode left an unpleasant taste in the mouths of Patel and Kripalani and was the subject two years later of a bitter exchange involving Azad and Nehru on one side and Patel and Kripalani on the other. The exchange, which occurred when the Working Committee members were together in Ahmednagar prison,

is recorded in detail in Nehru's prison diary.<sup>5</sup>

The foregoing shows that Azad was aware of Quit India, the move if not the phrase, in April 1942. Let us now see what *IWF* has to say.

*In the first week of July there was a meeting of the Working Committee at Wardha. I reached Wardha on 5 July and Gandhiji spoke to me for the first time about the Quit India movement. I could not easily adjust my mind to this new idea. (p. 74)*

But we have seen that it was not a new idea for Azad and he was not hearing about it for the first time. Azad also writes in *IWF*:

*I could not believe that with the enemy on the Indian frontier, the British would tolerate an organised movement of resistance. Gandhiji seemed to have a strange belief that they would... Gandhiji's idea seemed to be that since the war was on the Indian frontier, the British would come to terms with the Congress as soon as the movement was launched. (pp. 75-76)*

In fact, however, there is no evidence that Gandhi expected the British to come to terms or to view passively the revolt he was sponsoring. He had said, true, that he would make an attempt to see the Viceroy after the passage of the resolution and before putting it into effect, but that was only to gain time for Congress. There is no sign that he expected the Raj to look benignly at the revolt. While the Mahatma chose not to predict events after the passage of the resolution, Patel, who was moving in the closest teamwork with Gandhi, spoke again and again of the arrests that were about to take place and of the need for a "short and swift" struggle.<sup>6</sup> There is no evidence that Gandhi thought differently.

The following exchange, published in *Harijan* of July 26, 1942, confirms Gandhi's awareness that his arrest and that of his associates was imminent:

*Stuart Emeny of "News Chronicle": "Will your campaign collapse if Government send you and thousands of your followers to jail? Gandhi (laughing): "I hope not. On the contrary, it should gain strength if it has any vitality."*

In the event, Gandhi and thousands were sent to jail but the movement did not collapse.

Azad and Nehru's misgivings over the Quit India resolution were not allayed despite the adoption by Gandhi of some modifications sought by Nehru. Their stand prompted the Mahatma to propose Azad's resignation from Congress's chair and Nehru's from the Working Committee. Azad's account of this move by Gandhi is, however, at variance with the facts:

*Things reached a climax when he sent me a letter to the effect that my stand was so different from his that we could not work together. If Congress wanted Gandhiji to lead the movement. I must resign from the Presidentship and also withdraw from the Working Committee. He said Jawaharlal must do the same. I immediately sent for Jawaharlal and showed him Gandhiji's letter. Sardar Patel had also dropped in and he was shocked when he read the letter. He immediately went to Gandhiji and protested strongly against his action.*

*Gandhiji had sent me this letter early on the morning of 7 July. At about midday he sent for me. He made a long speech whose substance was that he had written in the morning in haste. He had now thought further over the matter and wanted to withdraw his letter. I could not but yield to his persuasion. When the Working Committee met at three in the afternoon the first thing Gandhiji said was that 'the penitent sinner has come to the Maulana'. (p. 77)*

### THE FACTS

Gandhi did propose Azad's resignation as President but not from the Working Committee. A letter to this effect was sent - but to Nehru, not to Azad. It was written on July 13 - not on July 7. After suggesting to Nehru that he resign from the Working Committee but continue to attend its meetings as an invitee, Gandhi added:

"This is my plea about Maulana Sahib: I find that the two of us have drifted apart. . . . I have also a suspicion that Maulana Sahib does not entirely approve of the proposed action. Therefore I propose that he should relinquish the Presidentship but remain in the Committee, the Committee should elect an interim President and all should proceed unitedly.

"This great struggle cannot be conducted properly without unity

and without a President who comes forth with a hundred per cent cooperation. Please show this letter to Maulana Sahib. At the moment it is intended for you two only. If you do not like either of my suggestions, you may reject them."<sup>7</sup>

Gandhi's remark, "I have also a suspicion that Maulana Sahib does not entirely approve of the proposed action", should be read alongside Azad's statement in *IWF* (p. 77): "*Our discussions started on 5 July and continued for several days. I had on earlier occasions also differed from Gandhiji on some points but never before had our differences been so complete.*" But Azad's expression of his opposition to Quit India was obviously indirect and guarded.

An account of what happened after Gandhi's letter was sent to Nehru is available in a letter, dated July 15, that Mahadev Desai wrote to Patel.<sup>8</sup> This letter recounts a talk on the subject of the Mahatma's letter to Nehru. The participants are Gandhi, Azad, Nehru and Ghaffar Khan.

In Desai's account, Gandhi comes across as determined and tough and unconcerned about the course of action that Azad and Nehru might adopt. The account contains no indication that Vallabhbhai ever questioned, let alone protested, Gandhi's suggestions about Nehru and Azad, and there is no sign of Gandhi withdrawing or apologising for them. Instead, Azad and Nehru withdrew their opposition to Quit India. After Gandhi's letter to Jawaharlal and the consequent talk recorded by Mahadev, Azad's and Nehru's complete cooperation was forthcoming. Says Mahadev at the end of his narration: "This is how the whole episode ended. I feel that what happened was just right. These men now understand the lengths to which Bapu is prepared to go."

Gandhi's letter remained with Nehru and found its way into the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*.

When, three weeks after Gandhi's candid remarks to Azad and Nehru, the AICC, meeting in Bombay, ratified Quit India, Azad was in the chair and Nehru the mover of the resolution. The Raj struck back at once and all the leaders were arrested in the early hours of August 9. Azad met the Mahatma on the special train taking the prisoners to their jails. He writes (pp. 88-9):

*I had never seen him looking so dejected. He had not expected this sudden arrest. I had of course warned him again and again that he was taking too optimistic a view but he had obviously placed*



*greater faith in his own judgment. Now...his calculations had been proved wrong.*

But the truth is that "the leaders of the Congress were aware, thanks to a leakage from official sources, that the Government planned to arrest them immediately upon the passage of the resolution in Bombay."<sup>9</sup>

Adds Azad:

*On 28 July I wrote a detailed letter to (Gandhi) in which I said that the Government was fully prepared and would take immediate action after the Bombay meeting of the AICC. Gandhiji replied that I should not draw any hasty conclusions. He also was studying the situation and he still believed that a way out may be found. (p. 84)*

But Azad does not reproduce either the letter he says he wrote on July 28 or the reply to which he refers. The *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* make no mention of Azad's supposed letter of July 28. Neither do they contain any letters from Gandhi to Azad written close to that date. In fact there is no evidence that the exchange of letters referred to actually took place. Neither is there evidence to support Azad's view that Gandhi had not expected the Raj to retaliate or that he was "too optimistic".

Corroboration for the statement that Gandhi looked surprised, "depressed" and "dejected" on the train after arrest is also lacking. It is fanciful to believe that the leakage of the Raj's plan to arrest everybody reached Patel, Nehru, Azad and company but not Gandhi. Azad's own account in *IWF* of his talk with Gandhi on the train casts doubt on his description of the Mahatma's spirits:

*After we had talked for a minute or two, Gandhiji said: "As soon as you reach your destination, you should inform the Government that you wish to continue to function as Congress President. You should ask for your private secretary and other necessary facilities for the purpose. You should...if necessary make an issue of it." (pp. 88-9)*

Azad turned down the advice. He "did not think that I would be justified in asking that my private secretary should be allowed to see

me so that I may carry on Congress work." (p. 89) Gandhi's advice may or may not have been appropriate. But his morale at the time seems to have been higher than Azad's.

We know from Nehru's prison diary and from the recollections of H.K. Mahtab that Azad claimed during the Ahmednagar detention of the Working Committee that his misgivings had been proved right.<sup>10</sup> Patel disputed the claim in Ahmednagar. When, after the leaders' release in 1945, immense crowds greeted them in the name of Quit India, Patel threw I-told-you-so looks at Quit India's detractors, and Congress, with Azad still its President, fought and won the early-1946 elections on the Quit India banner.

### HOW MANY IN AHMEDNAGAR?

Says Azad:

*Nine members of the Working Committee were brought to Ahmednagar with me, namely, Jawaharlal, Sardar Patel, Asaf Ali, Shankar Rao Deo, Govind Ballabh Pant, Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Dr Syed Mahmud, Acharya Kripalani and Dr Profulla Ghosh. (p. 91)*

In this sentence and in subsequent discussions of the Working Committee's long Ahmednagar sojourn, Azad leaves out two other colleagues who were also detained there along with the rest - Acharya Narendra Deva and Hare Krushna Mahtab. Nehru's and Pattabhi's recollections of Ahmednagar include references to Deva and Mahtab, and Mahtab has left his own account of the Ahmednagar time.

### GANDHI'S FAST

Writes Azad:

*In February (1943) we read in the newspapers that Gandhiji had written to the Viceroy that he would undertake a fast for self-purification. I was convinced that Gandhiji was prompted to take this step for two reasons. He had not expected that Government*

*would arrest the Congress leaders so suddenly. He had also hoped that he would get time to develop the movement on non-violent lines according to his own ideas. Both his hopes had been shattered. . . . As was usual with him, he was planning to undergo the fast as an expiation for his mistake. I could not see any sense in his fast on any other hypothesis. (p. 94)*

This is Azad writing in 1957 about his reactions in prison in February 1943 to the news that Gandhi was likely to go on a fast. Azad is entitled of course to his appraisal of the inner workings of Gandhi's mind. But is he entitled to suppress the explanation that Gandhi gave to his fast? Even if it is assumed that Gandhi's explanation was not available to the inmates of Ahmednagar in February 1943, it was of course well known subsequently to Azad. But he makes no reference to it.

At the time and later Gandhi claimed that his 21-day fast was directed at the Raj, not at himself. The Raj would neither prove nor withdraw its charges, circulated in India and abroad, especially in the United States, that Gandhi had condoned if not plotted the violence that had arisen after the August 1942 arrests, and its insinuation, similarly circulated, that he was pro-Japanese. The fast, the Mahatma asserted, was to combat this injustice.

In fact, the fast did not come as a surprise to Azad, and there was no need for him to find an explanation for it. Gandhi had publicly hinted in July 1942 that he might fast if arrested.<sup>11</sup> Not only was Azad well aware of this possibility, he had made frequent complaints in Ahmednagar, before the fast was announced, that Gandhi had not implemented his threat. Mahtab has referred to the early weeks in prison:

"We were together in Ahmednagar Fort. The Maulana used to criticise Gandhiji ...that his judgment was wrong, and he forced this movement on all of us, but what was expected of him he did not do. He thought that Gandhiji would go on an indefinite fast. (He said) 'We thought that he would gamble with his life but he hasn't done it.'<sup>12</sup>

## GANDHI'S RELEASE

Shortly after commenting on Gandhi's fast, Azad writes about

the Mahatma's subsequent release:

*About this time we suddenly read in the papers that Gandhiji had been released. I am inclined to think that he himself did not realise the reasons for this. He seemed to have thought that he owed his freedom to a change in British policy. Later events showed that he was again wrong. His health had been shattered by the fast he had undertaken. Since then he had suffered from one ailment after another. The fast had been beyond his capacity and the Civil Surgeon felt that his days were numbered. When the Viceroy received this report, he decided to release him. (p. 96)*

First Azad surmises that Gandhi "thought that he owed his freedom to a change in British policy". Nothing is said or quoted to substantiate the guess. Then, converting his belief into a fact, Azad concludes that later events again proved that Gandhi was wrong! But where is the evidence that Gandhi thought that British policy had changed? The suggestion in the passage quoted above that Gandhi's release came shortly after his fast is wrong too. There was a gap of 14 months between the two events.

### AZAD, JINNAH AND GANDHI

*When in July 1944, I read the report that Gandhiji was corresponding with Jinnah and going to Bombay to meet him, I told my colleagues that Gandhiji was making a great mistake. . . . Large sections of Indian Muslims were doubtful about Mr Jinnah and his policy but when they found that Gandhiji was continually running after him, many of them developed a new respect for Jinnah. (p. 97)*

Azad is not alone in holding this opinion. Patel shared it, and Nehru too. Adds Azad:

*I may mention here that it was Gandhiji who first gave currency to the title Qaid-i-Azam or great leader as applied to Mr Jinnah. Gandhiji had in his camp a foolish but well-intentioned woman called Amtus Salam. She had seen in some Urdu papers a reference to Jinnah as Qaid-i-Azam. When Gandhiji was writing to*

*Jinnah asking for an interview, she told him that the Urdu papers called Jinnah Qaid-i-Azam and he should use the same form of address. Gandhiji addressed Jinnah as Qaid-i-Azam. This letter was soon after published in the press. When Indian Muslims saw that Gandhiji also addressed Jinnah as Qaid-i-Azam, they thought that he must really be so. (p. 97)*

The effort to check the veracity of the statements in the above passage resulted in an interesting discovery. CWMG 71 reproduces on page 117 a letter dated January 16, 1940, from Gandhi to Jinnah in which the Mahatma addresses Jinnah as "Dear Qaid-i-Azam" and adds: "Abul Kalam tells me that in the League circles you are always called Qaid-i-Azam." If it was Azad rather than Miss Amtus Salam who first advised Gandhi to call Jinnah Qaid-i-Azam, then the irony in Azad's later criticism of Gandhi's practice would be supreme. Yet it seemed odd to the present writer that Gandhi should refer to Azad as "Abul Kalam" in a letter to Jinnah - in earlier and later letters to Jinnah, Gandhi calls Azad "Maulana Saheb". Dr Hari Dev Sharma, Deputy Director of the Nehru Library, confirmed when approached that "Abul Kalam" on page 117 in CWMG 71 was in fact an error - the result of lifting the text from a 1944 booklet entitled "Leaders' Correspondence with Mr Jinnah", edited by S.S. Peerzada and published by "The Taj Office", Bombay. This 1944 book contained "Abul Kalam", but a xerox at the Nehru Library from the Jinnah papers reveals that in his letter of January 16, 1940 Gandhi did in fact, as Azad says in *IWF*, refer to Amtul Salam (or Amtus Salam), and not to "Abul Kalam". Signed "Yours sincerely, M.K. Gandhi" by the Mahatma, this letter is written out in the unmistakable hand of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, who was one of Gandhi's secretaries.

Though Azad is thus right on the point of Miss Salam, he is wrong when he says that it was "when Gandhiji was writing to Jinnah asking for an interview" that Miss Salam gave him the advice she did. The letter of 16.1.40 contained no proposal for a meeting. Gandhi's letter suggesting a meeting was written on July 17, 1944 - and it began with "Brother Jinnah", not "Dear Qaid-i-Azam". However, it is true that from January 1940 onwards Gandhi's letters and articles frequently refer to Jinnah as Qaid-i-Azam.

But was Gandhi "the first to give currency to the title"? Azad's own statement quoted above shows that some Urdu papers were

anyway using that prefix for Jinnah. Khaliquzzaman has stated in his *Pathway to Pakistan* that "Muslims in India had started calling (Jinnah) Qaid-i-Azam" before Gandhi's use of the term.<sup>13</sup>

These comments on Azad's text do not of course prove that Gandhi was wise in using the prefix for Jinnah, or that his use of the prefix did not give a further fillip to Jinnah's image, or that he was right in seeking a meeting with Jinnah in July 1944.

Azad's carefully-worded phrase, "the title Qaid-i-Azam as applied to Mr Jinnah", holds a meaning. For it is a fact that the title was used for Azad himself in 1921, years before anyone - the Urdu press, Amtus Salam or Gandhi - applied it to Jinnah.<sup>14</sup> But it would appear that the usage did not continue beyond 1921.

#### AN AHMEDNAGAR DETAIL

Before their release in 1945 from Ahmednagar's military jail, the leaders were moved to other prisons. Writes Azad:

*British victory was now in sight. The Government of India felt that it was no longer necessary to keep us in this military prison and we could safely be transferred to the civil jails in our own provinces.*

*Sardar Patel and Shankar Rao Deo were the first to move out. (p. 102)*

In fact Patel was one of the very last to move out of Ahmednagar. Kripalani, Nehru, Pant, Asaf Ali, Narendra Deva, Mahtab and Pattabhi had left before him.<sup>15</sup>

#### THE SIMLA CONFERENCE, JULY 1945

Writes Azad:

*A day after my release, I received in Calcutta the Viceroy's invitation to the Round Table Conference which was to be held at Simla on 25 June. (p. 110)*

This is true. And it is also true that Azad attended the Simla

Conference, which failed because Jinnah did not accept the proposals of Viceroy Wavell, who had succeeded Linlithgow, though Congress did. Yet Azad could have added the information that in the first instance he did not receive the invitation. Wavell had sent it to Gandhi, viewing the Mahatma as Congress's leader, to Jinnah, as the League President, and to several others, including provincial Premiers, but not to Azad. Gandhi did only the proper thing when he advised that the appropriate person to be called on behalf of Congress was its President, Azad. The error, a consequence of the Raj's habit of treating Congress as a Hindu body, was rectified following a series of letters and telegrams from Gandhi to Wavell and the Maulana was invited.<sup>16</sup> This sequence of events may seem unimportant but it is relevant to any discussion of Azad's relationship with Gandhi in the 1940s.

#### THE RELEASE OF J.P. AND LOHIA

Writes Azad:

*While the majority of Congress prisoners came out, a small group of leftist workers of the Congress were still detained. They included Jayaprakash Narayan, Ramanandan Mishra and several others. I saw no reason why a small group of leftists should be detained when all others were being released. After the AICC met at Bombay in September (1945), I wrote a long and detailed letter to Lord Wavell...If Lord Wavell wanted to create a proper atmosphere in the country he should agree to a general amnesty. Lord Wavell finally agreed and they were all released. (p. 129)*

The Raj's records give a different version of how the release of J.P. and Rammanohar Lohia, which did not come about until April 1946, was agreed to. Viceroy Wavell's diary for April 9, 1946, contains this entry:

"Gandhi asked for the release of Jaya Prakash Narain. I did not commit myself, though I expect we shall have to release him shortly."<sup>17</sup>

The *Hindustan Times* of April 11, 1946, announced the release of J.P. and Lohia and said, "The swift action follows Gandhiji's appeal to the Viceroy."

## THE RIN MUTINY

The mutiny occurring in the Royal Indian Navy towards the end of February 1946 also features in *IWF*. Along with most of his colleagues in Congress, Azad disapproved of it and wanted the mutineers to return unconditionally to work before demanding redressal of grievances. Azad writes of his talk regarding the mutiny with the Commander-in-Chief of Britain's forces in India, now Lord Auchinleck, and of the action that he, Azad, took thereafter:

*Lord Auchinleck spoke in a most friendly spirit. . . .He said that there would be no victimisation if the officers returned to duty unconditionally. So far as discrimination is concerned, his entire effort would be to remove it completely. His replies satisfied me and I immediately issued a statement calling upon the officers to return to duty. . . .* (pp. 141-2)

Azad does not say directly that it was a result of his call that the mutineers called off the rebellion, but that is the clear implication of his passages on the mutiny. (pp. 140-2) However, the records of the Raj, the newspapers of the time and the memoirs of one of the leaders of the mutiny state in the plainest terms that it was Vallabhbhai Patel who gave the advice to surrender and whose advice was followed.

"Vallabhbhai Patel personally intervened to induce the ratings to surrender." So goes a note by the editor in the *Viceroy's Journal*.<sup>18</sup> B.C. Dutt, who was among the mutiny's initiators, says the same thing in his *Mutiny of the Innocents*.<sup>19</sup>

A front-page heading in the *Hindustan Times* of February 23 reads: "Strike Called Off on Sardar Patel's Advice". It was called off on February 22. Further study of the newspaper file shows that Azad's meeting with Auchinleck, reported in the issue dated February 24, took place on February 23 - after the mutiny had been called off! Azad's reference to "the officers" who had mutinied is also wrong. Only ratings had.



## THE BHULABHAI DESAI EPISODE

Though it is *IWF* 1988 that is supposed to contain material left out of *IWF* 1959, there is some material in the latter that has been left out of the "complete version". The allegedly unfair treatment of Bhulabhai Desai by the Working Committee in 1945-46 is one of the items found only in *IWF* 1959.

Bhulabhai Desai, who had earlier led Congress in the Central Assembly, was not given a ticket for the 1945-46 elections. One of the factors in the denial was the manner in which Desai had conducted negotiations with Liaqat Ali, the deputy leader of the Muslim League, while the Working Committee members were in prison. Gandhi, who had been released before the Working Committee, had endorsed the negotiations, which led to a Desai-Liaqat Pact. Soon, however, Liaqat denounced and disowned the Pact.

*Many Congressmen (writes Azad) were jealous of Bhulabhai's rapid advance in the organization. . . . Bhulabhai's opponents were also successful in turning Gandhiji against him by making allegations against Bhulabhai's private life...*

*Feeling against him became so strong that when the General Elections were held in the winter of 1945-6, he was not offered a ticket. This shocked Bhulabhai and affected his health. He had suffered from heart attacks before, but now the attacks became more frequent.*

Though Azad does not name him, his implication is that Patel was hostile to Desai and that he turned Gandhi against Desai. Dealing with Azad's version of the Desai episode, Kripalani has made four points. One, "Bhulabhai was (first) inducted into the Working Committee on the insistence of Vallabhbhai." Two, Azad had himself excluded Desai from the 1942 Working Committee, a fact admitted by Azad in *IWF*. Azad's explanation that he had dropped Desai because he "did not enjoy good health" is not accepted by Kripalani, who points out that others on the Working Committee in poor health were retained, e.g. Rajendra Prasad, who "was always ailing". Kripalani suggests that Desai had been kept out of Azad's 1942 Working Committee because "some members did feel that

Bhulabhai was not suited to...the hardships of jail life" and because his attitudes were those of a moderate.

Kripalani's third point is that in making his charge Azad "seems to have forgotten his own great irritation at the way the negotiations (with Liaquat) were carried on and their results." As Azad's companion in Ahmednagar, Kripalani had observed Azad's reaction. Finally, Kripalani notes that as the Congress President Azad was the Chairman of the parliamentary board that awarded or denied tickets, and adds:

"I do not remember his having protested against the denial of the ticket to Bhulabhai. If he had done so, his advice would have been followed. I say this because as General Secretary I was a member of the parliamentary board."<sup>20</sup>

A comment should be added. The decisive part in Desai's exclusion was played by Gandhi, not Patel. In a letter to Desai dated October 21, 1945, Gandhi referred to telegrams urging Desai's nomination and added: "If I were not behind this decision, even Sardar would submit to the pressure."<sup>21</sup> A perusal of this letter also shows that allegations against Desai's private life were not the only thing that influenced Gandhi's opinion.

Why the Bhulabhai Desai episode is missing in *IWF* 1988 is a mystery.

## Chapter Four

### *Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Azad: Equations in the Congress High Command*

Meeting in Calcutta in December 1945, the AICC decided that Congress's Presidential election should take place in May the following year. The last such election had taken place in 1940, when Azad had overwhelmingly defeated M.N. Roy. Congress's convention was to elect a head every year, but the War and the incarceration of Congress's leaders had made the exercise impossible in the intervening years. Azad had continued to hold the chair. The December 1945 session of the AICC fixed April 29, 1946, as the last day for receiving nominations.<sup>1</sup>

Referring to the period preceding this date - to March and April, 1946, in other words - , Azad writes:

*A general demand arose that I should be re-elected President for another term. . . . There was a general feeling in Congress that since I had conducted the negotiations till now, I should be charged with the task of bringing them to a successful close and implementing them. Congress circles in Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Bihar and the UP openly expressed the opinion that I should be charged with the responsibility of launching free India in its course. (p. 161)*

The sentences merit a close look. They state that Azad's re-election is generally desired, even demanded, in the country's largest and most populous provinces. He is needed not only as a negotiator for India's independence with the Cabinet Mission (which arrived on March 24); he is needed to implement the decisions arrived at; and it is he who should launch free India in its course. The meaning is

plain. Azad should be re-elected President of Congress so that he can settle with Britain and become free India's first Prime Minister.

In the event it was not Azad but Nehru who was chosen as Congress's President in May, 1946, and in that capacity asked in August 1946 to form the Interim Government. Jawaharlal was not formally styled Prime Minister yet. That title came on August 15, 1947. But as Vice-President of the Viceroy's Executive Council, the Viceroy himself being the President, Nehru was the de facto Premier from September 1946, when he and his colleagues took office.

It is perfectly possible, and indeed likely, that some of Azad's supporters wanted him to be re-elected President. But there was no "general demand" or "general feeling" or an "open expression" of opinion that the Maulana should be re-elected. A close perusal of the March and April 1946 files of the *Hindustan Times*, then the leading pro-Congress paper in North India, reveals no such demand; and Azad's own statement referring to it is not backed by any evidence.

Proceeds Azad:

*I however sensed that there was some difference of opinion in the inner circles of the Congress High Command. I found that Sardar Patel and his friends wished that he should be elected President. It became for me a very delicate question and I could not at first make up my mind as to what I should do. I thought carefully over the matter and finally came to the conclusion that since I had been President for seven years I must now retire. I therefore decided that I should not permit my name to be proposed.*

There is a little truth in these lines. It is true that Patel was nominated. It is also true, as the following account will show, that reconciling himself to vacating his chair took Azad some effort and time. But the remark that he decided that his name should not be proposed is misleading. Any 15 members of the AICC could have proposed Azad's name, even without his consent. The body's constitution did not require the consent of the person proposed. All the same, his name was not in fact proposed. Nor can it be said that his supporters heeded a public statement from Azad urging them not to propose his name, for no record of any such statement exists. It was never made.

Continues Azad:

*The next point which I had to decide was the choice of my successor. I was anxious that the next President should be one who agreed with my point of view and would carry out the same policy as I had pursued. (p. 162)*

Kripalani's comments on these statements are of interest. They come from one who was Congress's General Secretary for twelve years, from 1934 to 1946, and President from the end of 1946 to the end of 1947.

"No outgoing President has ever suggested his successor's name. . . . I have never known any President deciding the basic policies of the Congress. They are decided by the session of the Congress. When for any reason the session cannot meet, they are decided by the AICC. If in an emergency the AICC cannot meet, decisions are taken by the Working Committee . . . .The Congress President is the chairman of the Working Committee."<sup>2</sup>

Next Azad writes:

*After weighing the pros and cons, I came to the conclusion that the election of Sardar Patel would not be desirable in the existing circumstances. Taking all facts into consideration, it seemed to me that Jawaharlal should be the new President. Accordingly, on 26 April 1946 I issued a statement proposing his name for Presidentship and appealing to all Congressmen that they should elect Jawaharlal unanimously....*

*My statement caused a commotion among Congressmen all over the country. Several important leaders travelled from Calcutta, Bombay and Madras to persuade me to withdraw my statement and allow my name to be put up. Appeals in the press also appeared to the same effect.*

*But I had already taken a decision. . . .One factor which gave greater strength to my decision was Gandhiji's view. He agreed with me that I should not continue as President but he was not wholly pleased that I had proposed that Jawaharlal should succeed me. Perhaps he was somewhat inclined towards Sardar Patel, but once*

*I had proposed Jawaharlal's name, he gave no public indication of his views. Some people did propose the names of Sardar Patel and Acharya Kripalani, but in the end Jawaharlal was accepted unanimously. (pp. 162-3)*

The facts are wholly different. It was not Azad but Gandhi who put Nehru forward. It was not Vallabhbhai but Nehru that was Gandhi's preference. A letter that Gandhi wrote to Azad on April 20, 1946 proves both points. Said the Mahatma in this letter, which was written in Hindi:

"Please go through the enclosed cutting. . . .When one or two Working Committee members asked for my opinion, I said that it would not be right for the President to continue for another term. . . . If you are of the same opinion, you may issue a statement about the cutting and say that you have no intention to become President again. It is but proper that another person should now be the President.

"If asked, I would prefer Jawaharlal in today's circumstances. I have reasons for this. Why go into them? Yours, M.K. Gandhi."<sup>3</sup>

The clipping that was enclosed had said that Azad was quite keen to remain President and that Gandhi was opposed to the idea.<sup>4</sup>

Azad's statement of April 26, published in the papers of April 27, was a response to the letter from Gandhi quoted above. As claimed in *IWF*, this statement called for Nehru's election. But the call was redundant. By this time Nehru's name had already been formally proposed, thanks to the initiative of Kripalani, who was one of the Working Committee members (referred to in Gandhi's letter of April 20 to Azad) to whom the Mahatma had mentioned his preference. Kripalani's own name was one of the three duly proposed by this time for the Presidentship, Patel's and Pattabhi Sitaramayya's being the other two, but Kripalani took steps to implement the Mahatma's wish.

As he has written himself, "proposing Jawaharlal's name in deference to Gandhiji's wishes," Kripalani "sent a paper round" before April 29 - on April 25 to be exact - and obtained the signatures of several colleagues and also of some Delhi members of the AICC. Soon he had 15 signatures, Nehru was duly proposed, Kripalani, Patel and Pattabhi withdrew - again in deference to Gandhi's wishes -, and Nehru was left alone in the field.<sup>5</sup>

But Azad had not fully given up yet. On April 28 he announced

that the incumbent President, that is he himself, would remain in the chair until November, that is well after the departure of the Cabinet Mission and the promised installation of an Interim Government. This announcement was published through the news agency U.P.I. in the papers of April 29. Referring to it, Gandhi wrote to Azad early that morning that it would not be proper for Azad to continue as President by virtue of a ruling such as the one he had given. If he wanted to remain President, he should enter the lists and contest the new election.<sup>6</sup>

There was time still for Azad to do so. April 29 was still a valid (if also the last) day for receiving names. Azad was hurt, angered even, by Gandhi's explicit word. "I never thought," he wrote to Gandhi, "that you would think that the interests of Congress are not safe in my hands."<sup>7</sup> But he did not take up the option of competing against Nehru. And his ruling was not given effect to. When the AICC met in Bombay early in July, Azad made way for Nehru, whose unanimous election had been announced in May.

It is in the light of the above that we should read what Azad writes about what he calls his "decision to withdraw from the Congress Presidentship":

*I acted according to my best judgement but the way things have shaped since then has made me realise that this was perhaps the greatest blunder of my political life. I have regretted no action of mine so much as the decision to withdraw from the Presidentship of the Congress at this critical juncture. It was a mistake ...of Himalayan dimension.*

*My second mistake was that when I decided not to stand myself I did not support Sardar Patel. We differed on many issues but he ....would have never committed the mistake of Jawaharlal which gave Jinnah the opportunity of sabotaging the (Cabinet Mission) plan. I can never forgive myself when I think that if I had not committed these mistakes, perhaps the history of these last ten years would have been different. (p. 162)*

We will look in the next chapter at "the mistake of Jawaharlal". What is clear already is that Azad blames himself when he should be blaming Gandhi. The Maulana did not withdraw. He was asked not to stand. Does he reproach himself for not taking up Gandhi's chal-

lenge to contest against Nehru? Did he think that Nehru might have withdrawn had he, Azad, entered the lists? Possibly. We will never know. In any case, that is not what *India Wins Freedom* says on the subject. What it does say is demonstrably and completely false.

We may note in passing that Azad gives no clue as to the names or identity of the "important leaders" who "travelled from Calcutta, Bombay and Madras" to persuade "me to withdraw the statement and allow my name to be put up". This remark by him contains no proof that others attempted to persuade Azad to stand, but it confirms that the idea of his standing was considered by him, if only to be rejected, even after his April 26 statement.

Azad's untrue account of the selection of Congress's 1946 President hurts the image of Patel as much as that of Nehru. Suggesting that the Sardar and Gandhi were outmanoeuvred by Azad, it also deprives Patel of the credit he deserves for his abnegation in Nehru's favour. If Patel did not become Congress President (and the first de facto Premier) in the summer of 1946, it was not because Azad "did not support Sardar Patel". It was because Patel stepped aside in obedience to Gandhi.



## *Chapter Five*

### *Fatal Ambiguity: The Story of the Cabinet Mission Plan*

The Cabinet Mission - three members of the British Cabinet - arrived in India in March 1946 for talks with Congress, the League and the princes. Azad was still the Congress President.

*Jawaharlal proposed (writes Azad) that the discussions with the Cabinet Mission should be conducted by a small subcommittee of the Working Committee and not a single representative. His proposal surprised me.... (But) Gandhiji supported me. He said clearly that he saw no reason for a change. If the Congress President could be the sole representative in the discussions with Cripps (1942) and Wavell (1945), he did not see why there should be any change now.... The Working Committee accepted Gandhiji's advice and again appointed the President as the sole representative of the Congress. (pp. 139-40)*

Congress's official record of the resolutions of its committees from March 1940 to September 1946 contains no reference to any appointment of Azad as Congress's sole representative in talks with the Mission.<sup>1</sup> Newspapers reports of the deliberations and resolutions of the Working Committee that met in Bombay in the middle of March 1946 are similarly silent about the supposed appointment of the sole representative.

What the *Hindustan Times* of March 16 says is that "on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi" three men, Azad, Nehru and Patel, had been "asked to negotiate for Congress with the help of the Working Committee". This report was, however, amended in the *Hindustan*

*Times* of the following day, which quoted Nehru as saying that while "no committee" had been named, Azad would be meeting the Cabinet Mission in his "official" capacity and others in their "private" capacities.

From this it would appear that the Working Committee's first thought, which Gandhi evidently endorsed, was for a team of three to represent Congress. Nehru's subsequent clarification was probably the outcome of a protest by Azad. We may note, however, that Nehru's clarification does not speak of any "sole representative".

As Congress President Azad did meet the Cabinet Mission on his own a couple of times but Nehru, Patel, Prasad and Rajaji also had discussions with the British Ministers, and the *Hindustan Times* of April 13, 1946, states that Azad, Nehru and Patel briefed the Working Committee on their talks with the Mission. Most conclusive, however, is a letter that Azad wrote on April 28, 1946, to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, the leader of the Mission: "I have asked three of my colleagues in the Congress Working Committee, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, to accompany me in my negotiations."<sup>2</sup>

It was this team of four, rather than Azad alone, that conferred with the Raj in Simla in the summer of 1946.

## THE CABINET MISSION PLAN

Writes Azad:

*The Cabinet Mission published its scheme on 16 May. Basically it was the same as the one sketched in my statement of 15 April. (p. 156)*

Let us quote (from *IWF*, p. 152) the core of Azad's 15 April (1946) scheme. It provided for

*full autonomy to the provincial units and vesting all residuary power in the provinces. It also has provided for two lists of Central subjects, one compulsory and one optional, so that if any provincial unit so wants, it can administer all subjects itself except a minimum delegated to the Centre.*

*(It) ensures that Muslim majority provinces are internally free to develop as they will, but can at the same time influence the Centre on all issues which affect India as a whole.*

The May 16 Plan of the Cabinet Mission is available in all reference books and has been discussed in several studies. It provided for a Centre, for provinces - and for Groups of provinces. Three such Groups were envisaged: a Muslim-majority Group in the west, comprising all of Punjab, Sind, the N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan, another Muslim-majority region in the east, consisting of all of Bengal and Assam, inclusive of all the areas in today's North-east, and a Hindu-majority Group of all the remaining provinces.

A fierce controversy over how the Groups would be formed, and whether or not a province placed in a Group had the option to stay out of it, proved the Plan's undoing. But the Groups, seen by the British Ministers as an alternative to the sovereign Pakistan that the League was demanding, were integral to the May 16 Plan. They had no place whatsoever in Azad's scheme.

Basically, therefore, there was a world of difference between Azad's April 15 plan and the May 16 Plan of the Cabinet Mission. The Maulana's statement to the contrary is untrue and misleading.

### "ACCEPTANCE" AND "JUBILATION"

*The acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan by both the Congress and the Muslim League (says Azad) was a glorious event in the history of the freedom movement in India. It meant that the difficult question of Indian freedom had been settled by negotiation and agreement and not by violence and conflict....Throughout the country there was a sense of jubilation. It also seemed that the communal difficulties had been finally left behind. (p. 158)*

Every sentence in this statement is incorrect. What Congress accepted was not the Plan but its own interpretation of the Plan. The League's "acceptance" was on an opposite interpretation. From the start Congress, through Azad himself, made it clear that it understood the Plan to mean that provinces such as Assam and the N.W.F.P. could stay out of the Muslim Groups to which they had

been assigned.<sup>3</sup> The League's acceptance, on the other hand, was conditional on the inclusion of the N.W.F.P. in the western Muslim Group and of Assam in the eastern Muslim Group. The League also made it quite plain that it was accepting the May 16 Plan only because it represented "the basis of Pakistan" and because "it would ultimately result in the establishment of a complete sovereign Pakistan".<sup>4</sup>

It is not as if the sharp differences in what Congress and the League were accepting were concealed at the time. On the very day on which Azad conveyed Congress's "acceptance" to the Mission, Jinnah asked Britain to disregard Congress's "insincere" acceptance and told Wavell that "Groups were an essential feature of the scheme which the Congress wanted to smash."<sup>5</sup> After Azad conveyed Congress's "acceptance" on June 25 - the League had "accepted" the May 16 Plan on June 6 - , there was no "agreement", no "sense of jubilation" and no feeling whatsoever "that the communal difficulties had been finally left behind".

Whether or not intentional, the doublespeak in the Mission's Plan ruined whatever merit it might have had. It enabled the two conflicting parties to "accept" wholly different things. In para 15, the Plan said that "provinces should be free to form groups". In paragraph 19 it used the phrase "shall". (TOP 7, pp. 582-9) Azad's suppression of the fatal ambiguity in the Plan imparts superficiality to his discussion of its merits. It also forces him to contradict himself.

*The unequivocal acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan by the Congress Working Committee led to an immediate response by the Viceroy. (p. 168)*

*Mr Jinnah argued that it was on the basis of the distribution of power among the Centre, the Provinces and the Groups that he had persuaded the League to accept the Plan. Assam Congress leaders did not agree. . . After some hesitation Gandhiji gave his support to the interpretation suggested by the leaders from Assam.*

*In fairness to Mr Jinnah, I have to admit that on this point Mr Jinnah was on the whole right. Both justice and expediency demanded that the Congress should have accepted the Plan unequivocally. (p. 187)*

*(The Congress) should have accepted the Plan unequivocally if it stood for the unity of India. (p. 185)*

The Plan's internal contradiction made unequivocal acceptance impossible. Months after first presenting it, British finally clarified (in December 1946) that provinces *had* to join the Groups to which they were assigned.\* Azad suggests on p. 187 that this seemed fair to him on the whole; and when he says that Congress should have made an "unequivocal acceptance" he means that Congress should have accepted compulsory grouping. But he did not say so at the time either to the Raj or to the public or to his Working Committee colleagues. In fact he had signed Congress's June 25 letter "adhering" to "our interpretation" and "our views" in favour of optional grouping.<sup>6</sup>

Azad's account of Gandhi's views on the Plan is at variance with the facts. He writes (pp. 184-5):

*Gandhiji had initially accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan and declared that "the Cabinet Mission's proposal contain the seed to convert this land of sorrow into one without sorrow and suffering"....However, Gandhiji's views changed and he gave support to Bardoloi (leader of the Assam Congress)....*

*After some hesitation Gandhiji gave his support to the interpretation suggested by the leaders from Assam. (p. 187)*

The facts are that publicly and privately and from the start Gandhi had opposed compulsory grouping. He had opposed it even while it was being discussed prior to the May 16 announcement. On May 8 he had called it "worse than Pakistan" in a letter to Cripps, one of the Mission's members.<sup>7</sup> Azad could not have been unaware

---

\* The May 16 Plan always contained an express and uncontested provision for a province leaving its Group *after* the Group had framed a Constitution for that province *and after* a new provincial legislature had been elected under the new Constitution. But Congress feared that the Muslim Groups would nullify Assam's and the N.W.F.P.'s right by gerrymandering and by laying down stringent constitutional procedures for leaving a Group.

of this letter; and he could not have been unaware of Gandhi's objection to compulsory grouping contained in the very article of *Harijan* from which Azad has lifted the sentence about the seed that could convert a land of sorrow. "Is the Frontier Province," the Mahatma asked in that article, "to belong against its will to B (the western Muslim Group), or Assam to C (the eastern Muslim Group)?" "The voluntary character of the Statement," added Gandhi, "demands that the liberty of the individual units (provinces) should be unimpaired."<sup>8</sup>

Gandhi said that he could accept the Plan if it meant optional grouping. Eager to obtain his acceptance, Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence gave him the assurance he asked for. But the assurance was not wholehearted. It could not be; Jinnah had to be offered a contrary assurance. Since the assurance was not wholehearted, Gandhi told the Working Committee that he was not in favour of the May 16 Plan. Azad, still in the chair, asked the Working Committee: "What do you desire? Is there any need to detain Bapu?"<sup>9</sup> No one asked Gandhi to stay. He left, the Working Committee agreed to May 16 with its own interpretation, and Azad conveyed the "acceptance" to the Raj.

## THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT

Talks regarding an Interim Government at the Centre were proceeding along with the discussions on the May 16 Plan, which was for the long term. Congress did not like the Raj's proposal for the new Ministry. To win Jinnah's approval, the Raj had proposed a Cabinet without any non-League Muslim. This neither Gandhi nor the Working Committee was prepared to accept. But Azad seems to have written a letter to Pethick-Lawrence expressing his willingness to agree to the exclusion of a Congress Muslim. This letter is referred to in Pyarelal's *Last Phase* (Vol. 1, pp. 234-5), in Kripalani's *Gandhi* (p. 238) and in Sudhir Ghosh's *Gandhi's Emissary* (pp. 165-8), but its text has not yet come on record. It is on record, however, that Azad was the sole dissident when the Working Committee rejected the Raj's proposal for an Interim Government in which Jinnah would have the sole right to nominate Muslims.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Pethick-Lawrence wrote to Attlee on June 20 that Azad was "the leader of the point of view" that Congress should not break with

Britain on the question of a non-League Muslim.<sup>11</sup>

Though Azad devotes three chapters to the Cabinet Mission and the Interim Government that was formed in its wake, he makes no reference to the question of the dispute over a Congress Muslim or to his own stand on the subject, an omission as conspicuous as it is regrettable.

Britain had committed itself to reopening the question of the Interim Government in the event of Congress accepting the long-term plan. The reopening infuriated Jinnah, who had accepted both the May 16 Plan and the Interim Government proposed by the Raj. Feeling out-manoeuvred, Jinnah waited on events, wondering what his tactics should be. Meeting in Bombay early in July, the AICC ratified the Working Committee's decision to accept May 16. Despite his misgivings, Gandhi asked the AICC to back the Working Committee.

Azad writes of this AICC meeting:

*My speech had a decisive influence on the audience. When the vote was taken, the resolution was passed with an overwhelming majority. (p. 164)*

Nehru, Patel, Prasad, Rajaji and most leaders were in favour of the resolution. The Mahatma had advised its acceptance. Azad's claim of influencing the outcome "decisively" is not warranted by the facts and not corroborated by any account of the time.

While Congress waited for an invitation to fresh talks on the Interim Government, Nehru made the utterances that feature in every book about the political events of 1946 and 1947. Azad's comment on Nehru's remarks is as follows:

*Now happened one of those unfortunate events which change the course of history. On July 10, Jawaharlal held a press conference in Bombay in which he made an astonishing statement. Some press representatives asked him whether with the passing of the resolution by the AICC, the Congress had accepted the Plan in toto....*

*Jawaharlal stated in reply that Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly (which the May 16 Plan envisaged) "completely unfettered by agreements and free to meet all situations as they*

arise".

*Jawaharlal replied emphatically that the Congress...regarded itself free to change or modify the Cabinet Mission Plan as it thought best. (pp.164-5)*

After Nehru's July 10 remarks, Jinnah denounced both the Congress and the Raj and convened the League Council. The League's acceptance of the May 16 Plan was rescinded and "Direct Action" to achieve Pakistan was resolved upon. A Direct Action day, observed on August 16, led to murder, arson, rape and looting in Calcutta, where Suhrawardy led Bengal's League-dominated coalition ministry. At first many Hindus were killed in Calcutta, then a larger number of Muslims. In retaliation, a number of Hindus were killed in Noakhali in eastern Bengal. In counter-retaliation, a greater number of Muslims were murdered in Bihar. According to Azad, the chain of events constituted

*one of the greatest tragedies of Indian history and I have to say with the deepest of regret that a large part of the responsibility for this development rests with Jawaharlal. (p. 179) His unfortunate statement that the Congress would be free to modify the Cabinet Mission Plan reopened the whole question of political and communal settlement and Mr Jinnah took full advantage of his mistake and withdrew from the League's early acceptance of the Plan. (p. 170)*

Nehru's remarks were indeed indiscreet and unfortunate and gave the League a handle. Writing privately at the time to Dwarka Prasad Mishra, Patel used strong words and spoke of Nehru's "emotional insanity". In the same letter, however, Patel also referred to Nehru's "innocent indiscretions" and said that Jawaharlal had been "exhausted by overwork and strain".<sup>12</sup> But Azad gives to Nehru's blunder a bigger role than the facts justify. Bitterness between Congress and the League was intense well before Nehru's July 10 remarks. The latter brought it into the open. Yet Azad greatly stretches the point when he holds that "perhaps the history of the last ten years (1946 to 1956) would have been different" if Nehru had not made his remarks. (p. 162)

Jinnah's sharpest hostility was against Congress's interpretation



of grouping and for this Nehru alone cannot be made responsible. Gandhi, Patel, Prasad, Rajaji and Azad himself held to that interpretation. On July 6, four days *before* Nehru's rash remarks, Jinnah had conveyed his mood in a letter to Premier Attlee. A similar letter had gone to Churchill, the leader of the British opposition. Jinnah spoke to Attlee and Churchill of Congress's "aggressive and dictatorial attitude, pistol in the hand". Congress's leaders, he added, were "determined to seize power and try to establish Caste Hindu domination over Muslim India and the other communities". "I therefore trust," Jinnah went on, "that the British Government will still avoid compelling the Muslims to shed their blood."<sup>13</sup>

This being Jinnah's feeling and language four days before Nehru's remarks, it cannot be maintained that the tragic events of August and the rest of 1946 were solely or even primarily linked to Nehru's remarks.

After *IWF* first came out, Nehru was asked if he was hearing Azad's criticisms for the first time. "Not all," replied Nehru, "but some, yes." He added that Azad's remarks about his (Nehru's) 1946 role were among the strictures that he was hearing for the first time.<sup>14</sup>

## JINNAH AND DIRECT ACTION

Writes Azad:

*One may perhaps say in Jawaharlal's defence that he never expected the Muslim League to resort to direct action. Mr Jinnah had never been a believer in mass movement. I have myself tried to understand what brought about this change in Mr Jinnah. He had perhaps hoped that when the Muslim League rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan, the British Government would reopen the whole question and hold further discussions....His calculations however proved wrong. The British Government did not oblige Mr Jinnah by initiating fresh discussions. (p. 172)*

This explanation for Jinnah's stand does not hold water. Azad must have known that it did not, for on July 29, 1946, the very day on which the League rescinded its acceptance of May 16, Plan, Jinnah had declared:

"What we have done today is the most historic act in our history. This day we bid goodbye to constitutional methods. Throughout... the British and the Congress held a pistol in their hand, the one of authority and arms and the other of mass struggle and non-cooperation. Today we have also forged a pistol and are in a position to use it."<sup>15</sup>

Jinnah was not waiting for the British Government to reopen discussions. Constitutional methods were farewelled that very day.

### AZAD'S LETTER TO CRIPPS

*Sir Stafford Cripps (writes Azad) had been in correspondence with me throughout this period. I had written to him that the Cabinet Mission held discussions with the Congress and the Muslim League for over two months and finally framed a plan which both the Congress and the League had accepted. It was unfortunate that the League had withdrawn from that position but the responsibility for this rested with the League. This must not however lead to a reopening of the question....*

*Sir Stafford Cripps replied that he agreed with me....Events turned out as I had expected....On 12 August the Viceroy issued a communique inviting Jawaharlal to form the Interim Government. (pp. 172-3)*

Azad's meaning is this. Despite Nehru's July 10 blunder, he (Azad) wrote a helpful letter to Cripps. As a result, Jawaharlal got the opportunity to form his Government. Alas for Azad's claim, the text of his letter to Cripps is on record. It was written on July 22, after Nehru's indiscreet remarks but before the League's withdrawal of its acceptance. Its burden is the partiality of Wavell towards the League: "The Viceroy supported the groundless objections of the League....The Viceroy seemed to support the attitude of the League."<sup>16</sup>

There seems to be no trace of any other letter from Azad to Cripps in July or August, and there is nothing in the July 22 letter to suggest that it smoothed Nehru's path to Government. All that Azad's July 22 letter does is to contradict his praise for Wavell, reproduced on p. 193 in *IWF*:

*I found him a rugged, straightforward soldier void of verbiage and direct both in approach and statement. He was not devious like the politician but came straight to the point and created in the mind an impression of great sincerity....*

### NEHRU'S N.W.F.P. TRIP

The League was excluded from the Interim Government formed in September. Its July 29 call for Direct Action and the withdrawal of its acceptance of the May 16 Plan had disqualified the League. Following the Direct Action killings, however, Wavell resolved that the League had to be brought into the Government and raised the question with Nehru and Jinnah. Before the question was settled, Nehru decided to make a trip to the N.W.F.P., which was governed by Congress's allies, the Khudai Khidmatgars. Toppling this Khudai Khidmatgar Ministry, which was led by Dr Khan Sahib, brother of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, was however one of the aims of a Muslim League embittered by exclusion from the Interim Government.

*Soon after the Interim Government was formed (writes Azad), Jawaharlal said that he would tour the Frontier and assess the situation for himself. When I heard this I told Jawaharlal that he should not take any hasty action....His tour in the Frontier at this stage would give the dissident element an opportunity of organising their opposition to Congress....It would therefore be better if he postponed his visit till a more appropriate time. But Jawaharlal insisted and said that whatever the consequences he would go....*

*The British officers were against Congress and had aroused general feeling against the Ministry. When Jawaharlal landed at the airport, he found thousands of Pathans massed there with black flags and shouting anti-slogans....The next day Jawaharlal left for a tour of the tribal areas....In some places his car was stoned and one stone hit Jawaharlal on the forehead....Jawaharlal exhibited neither weakness nor fear and showed the greatest courage....After his return, Lord Wavell expressed his regret about the whole affair and wished that an enquiry should be made into the conduct of the officers.*

*Jawaharlal did not agree to take any action against them. This greatly impressed Lord Wavell. (pp. 181-3)*

Some of the above is true but much of it is not. There is no evidence that Azad opposed the trip. Wavell did not express any regret over what happened and offered no enquiry. Jawaharlal did propose an enquiry but it was not held. Evidence on these points is available in Wavell's diary, *The Viceroy's Journal*, in the *Transfer of Power* volumes and in the *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*. Nehru's letter asking for an enquiry is dated October 26, 1946. It was addressed to Sir Olaf Caroe, Governor of the N.W.F.P., and is published in *TOP* 8, pp. 814-5. Wavell's record of his interview with Nehru, following Nehru's return from the Frontier, is also in *TOP* 8, pp. 763-4. The interview took place on October 22, 1946. There is no suggestion in Wavell's account of his offering an enquiry or of Nehru not wanting one or of the Viceroy saying sorry. The entry in Wavell's diary merely says: "After lunch I saw Nehru, looking worn and tired after his Frontier experiences." (p. 361) *SWJN* 1 (Second Series) mentions objectors to Nehru's trip but Azad is not one of them.

## THE LEAGUE GETS THE FINANCE PORTFOLIO

On October 26 the League's nominees were sworn in as members of the Interim Government. Azad's account makes no mention of Congress's unhappiness that Wavell did not secure the League's acceptance of the May 16 Plan before the League's nominees were taken into the Interim Government. The League's entry necessitated a redistribution of portfolios. According to Azad, "*Congress committed a great mistake in handing over Finance to the Muslim League*". (p. 179)

*Lord Wavell had suggested that one of the major portfolios should go to a representative of the League. His own suggestion was that we should give up the Home Department but Sardar Patel who was the Home Member vehemently opposed the suggestion. My view was that the issue of law and order was essentially a provincial subject....As such the Home Ministry in the Centre would not have much importance in the new set up. I was therefore for accepting Lord Wavell's suggestion but Sardar Patel was adamant. He said*

*that if we insisted, he would rather leave the Government than give up the Home portfolio.*

*We then considered other alternatives. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai suggested that we should offer the Finance portfolio to the Muslim League. It was a highly technical subject and the League had no member who could handle it effectively....Sardar Patel jumped at the proposal and gave it his strongest support....I did not feel happy at the decision but since all others agreed, I submitted...Accordingly Mr Liaqat Ali became the member for Finance. He then obtained the possession of the key to the Government. Every proposal of every Department was subject to scrutiny by his Department....Not a chaprasi could be appointed in any Department without the sanction of his Department. (pp. 177-9)*

There seems to be no evidence, apart from this statement by Azad, that he opposed the handing over of Finance to the League. His remark that he submitted to the decision conceals the fact that he went beyond "submission". The truth is that the Working Committee agreed, without any objection voiced by Azad, that all the Congress Ministers would resign if Home was taken away from Congress. This is what Nehru conveyed in writing to Wavell on October 24. Nehru's letter is in *TOP* 8, pp. 803-4.

Azad is right, however, in suggesting that the Congress ministers were surprised by the headaches that a League Finance Minister was able to give them. That law and order was primarily a provincial subject was also true, but the possession of Home gave Patel control over the Services, an important consideration left out of Azad's account. The Maulana also fails to mention that Congress had a third option. Instead of either Finance or Home, it could have given up -- to quote Pyarelal -- "the more glamorous but perhaps, at that time, not half so important portfolio of External Affairs".<sup>17</sup>

In additional remarks on Finance going to the League, Azad says:

*It seems that at first Mr Jinnah was a little uncertain about the offer....He was doubtful if Liaqat could adequately handle Finance. Some Muslim officers of the Finance Department heard this news and they immediately contacted Mr Jinnah. They told him that the*

*offer was a real windfall.... With the control of Finance the League would have a say in every Department of the Government....Mr Jinnah accepted the proposal. (pp.178-9)*

This story that Jinnah was hesitant at first and accepted Finance only after Muslim officers from the Finance Department explained its importance to him is false. Wavell's account of Jinnah's response to the offer of Finance proves its falsity. Says Wavell in his diary:

"October 24....The morning began with a long letter from Nehru...offering the Finance portfolio if the League must have one of the major ones.... I sent for Jinnah at 7.30 p.m., informed him of the position and asked whether the League would accept the Finance portfolio. J. was not in a very accommodating mood and accused the Congress of mutilating on the radio his statement about the Noakhali disturbances, but he agreed to the Finance and Commerce portfolios with three others...." (p. 363)

#### NEHRU'S LONDON TRIP

Congress demanding the League Members' ejection from the Interim Government because of their party's failure to accept the May 16 Plan and the League demanding the Congress Members' ejection because of their party's failure to accept obligatory grouping, HMG decided to hold a conference in London. Nehru, Patel, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali and Baldev Singh (the Sikh member of the Interim Government), were invited. Writes Azad:

*At first the Congress was not willing to accept this invitation. Jawaharlal in fact told Lord Wavell that there would be no point in going to London....All relevant issues had been thrashed out again and again. Lord Wavell did not agree with Jawaharlal and discussed the matter in further detail with me....I recognized the force of Lord Wavell's arguments and persuaded my colleagues to change their point of view. It was then decided that Jawaharlal should go on behalf of Congress. (p. 186)*

There are only two true statements in the above. At first Congress did decline the invitation, and in the end Nehru did go as the

Congress representative. But Wavell did not try to persuade Congress to go. His diary (pages 382-4) makes this quite clear. The man who did seek to persuade Nehru (somewhat to Wavell's annoyance) was Attlee. "As I rather expected," Wavell wrote, "HMG came back with a personal appeal by the P.M. to Nehru." (p. 384) There is no reference in Azad's account to Attlee's intervention, which caused Nehru to change his mind; and there is no reference anywhere other than in *IWF* to Azad's supposed (and supposedly successful) effort to persuade his Congress colleagues to go to London. Patel had refused to go and urged Nehru also not to go. "I didn't go," Patel wrote to Gandhi on December 9, 1946. "He (Nehru) shouldn't have gone. But he didn't listen".<sup>18</sup> Patel's opposition to the London talks disproves Azad's claim that he had "persuaded his colleagues to change their point of view".

Following the London talks, the British Cabinet (as Azad correctly points out) "issued a statement in which it upheld the point of view of the Muslim League in grouping". (p. 187) If Congress rejected the verdict, it would have had to quit the Government. Even so rejection was Gandhi's advice, but Nehru, Patel, Azad, Prasad and C.R. refused to accept it.<sup>19</sup> Then the High Command and Gandhi agreed that Congress on its part should accept HMG's ruling and interpretation but should free Assam, the N.W.F.P. and the Sikhs of the Punjab to act as they saw fit. Jinnah said this was jugglery, not acceptance.

## HEADING THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

*The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly was held (writes Azad) on 11 December 1946. The question arose as to who should be the President of the Assembly. Both Jawaharlal and Sardar Patel were of the view that someone not in the Government should be elected President. They both pressed me to accept the office but I did not feel inclined to agree. Several other names were then discussed but there was no agreement. Finally Dr Rajendra Prasad was elected though he was a member of the Government. (p. 187)*

Azad's is the only word we have that Nehru and Patel pressed him to chair the Constituent Assembly. No such wish or effort is indi-

cated either in the Nehru papers or in Patel's correspondence or in his daughter's diary. B.N. Rau's *India's Constitution in the Making* and the volume edited by B. Shiva Rao, *The Framing of India's Constitution: A Study*, make no reference to the possibility of Azad presiding over the Assembly. K.M. Munshi, a key member of the Assembly and of its Drafting Committee, writes that while Gopalaswami Ayyangar was mentioned as a possibility, "no sooner had they (the Assembly Members) assembled in New Delhi than by an unsolicited consensus, Rajendra Prasad came to the surface as the irresistible choice".<sup>20</sup>

Munshi refers to Azad as one of the personalities of the Assembly but not as a candidate for heading it. According to Munshi, Azad "spoke with superb self-confidence but only in his high-flown Urdu".<sup>21</sup> Given the significant percentage of members unable to understand Urdu or Hindi, and given also Azad's hesitation and lack of fluency in speaking English, neither Nehru nor Patel could have envisaged the Maulana in the chair. Azad's account is highly improbable.

*IWF* 1959, published while Prasad was India's President, inserts the following after the passage quoted above, which as we have seen ends with Prasad's election to the office despite his being a member of the Government:

*"This proved a very happy choice. for he carried out the duties of President with great distinction and offered valuable suggestions and advice on many critical issues."* (p. 174)

It is likely that this insertion is Kabir's, made to offset the sense of complaint conveyed by the passage preceding.

The Constituent Assembly first met on December 9, 1946. The date given by Azad is wrong.

## AZAD JOINS THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT

*When the Interim Government was formed in September 1946 (writes Azad) Gandhiji and my colleagues had pressed me to join. I had however felt that at least one senior Congress leader should remain outside the Government....I had therefore put Asaf Ali into the Government. After the League joined the Interim Government new difficulties arose. Thus the question again arose about my participation. Gandhiji pressed me even more strongly than before that I should join....Accordingly, on 15 January 1947 I took over Educa-*



tion. (p. 188)

An inelegant and inaccurate remark and two suppressions mark this statement. The observation that he had "put Asaf Ali into the Government" is not becoming. It is not wholly accurate either, because it was finally up to Nehru to choose his team. But it is true that Asaf Ali's name was suggested by Azad and accepted by Nehru and Patel.

The two suppressions are as follows. Azad had to begin with stayed out of the Interim Government not because of a feeling that "at least one senior leader should remain outside" but because he wanted to become Congress President again. Nehru's assumption of the Executive Council's Vice-Presidentship meant that he had to give up the party chair. Azad was ready to fill it. "I'd rather be Congress President," he told Nehru, Patel and Prasad when the three had asked him, on August 19, 1946, to join the Interim Government. The remark was quoted by Patel in a letter to Gandhi on August 20.<sup>22</sup> But Gandhi and Patel preferred Kripalani, who took over from Nehru in November 1946. *IWF* makes no mention of the revival, towards the end of 1946, of Azad's interest in Congress's chair.

The second suppression is of the fact that Azad entered the Government on January 15, 1947, because Asaf Ali had been named Ambassador to the U.S.A. and a vacancy had been created. Nehru says so in his letter to the Viceroy proposing Azad's name.<sup>23</sup>

### WHY WAVELL LEFT

The Indian deadlock, signified by Congress and the League demanding each other's ouster, was broken by a new British policy and a change in the Viceroy. Azad has given his explanation and description of the change:

*Wavell advised that the status quo should be maintained and every attempt made to compose the differences between the two major parties....It was his firm conviction that it would be unworthy if the British withdrew without a previous understanding between Congress and the League. Mr Attlee (felt) that suspense was most undesirable. He decided (on) a date for withdrawal of British power from India. This would place the responsibility squarely on Indian shoulders. Lord Wavell was not convinced....The British had*

*governed India for over a hundred years and they would be responsible if unrest, violence and disorder broke out with their withdrawal. When he found that he could not convince Mr Attlee, Lord Wavell offered his resignation.*

*The day before he left, Lord Wavell presided over his last Cabinet meeting. After the business was over, he made a brief statement which made a deep impression on me. Lord Wavell said: "I became Viceroy at a very difficult and critical time....A situation however developed which made me resign. History will judge whether I acted rightly in resigning on this issue." (pp. 190-94)*

Virtually every statement in this extract is false. Wavell did not want the status quo maintained. He did not at all believe that the Congress-League differences could be composed. Far from opposing British withdrawal, he had his own plan for withdrawal which he was continually pressing HMG to accept. Instead of opposing a deadline he favoured it. He did not resign; he was dismissed. He did not preside over a Cabinet meeting the day before he left. The last Cabinet meeting was held four days before his departure, and he seems to have made no speech at its end.<sup>24</sup> And unless he chose to tell a complete lie, Wavell could have never spoken of his "resigning" on any issue, for he knew very well that he had been sacked. His diary for February 4, 1947 reads: "Just after lunch I had a letter from the P.M. by special messenger, dismissing me from my post at a month's notice. Not very courteously done." (p. 417)

"Dismissal" is in fact the heading of Chapter 15 of *The Viceroy's Journal*. "A situation however developed" is an expression so foreign to Wavell's style that even in a delirious or absent-minded state he could not have uttered it. As for a Congress-League compromise, Wavell had said in a written note to HMG on December 3, 1946: "To attempt to negotiate a fresh settlement is (not) a practicable policy." And his written recommendation was a Breakdown Plan, "to be announced and acted upon, whatever happened, not later than 31st March, 1947". This Breakdown Plan was, in Wavell's words, "a programme of orderly withdrawal" - not, to begin with, from all of India, but from "the four southern provinces of Madras, Bombay, the Central Provinces and Orissa".<sup>25</sup> *IWF's* purely imaginary account of the Wavell-Attlee dispute, of Wavell's views and of his departure has its facts upside down.

## Chapter Six

### *The Acceptance of Partition*

Attlee announced on February 20, 1947 that Lord Louis Mountbatten, cousin to the King, would replace Wavell; that Britain would "transfer power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948"; and that power would go either "as a whole to some form of Central Government or in some areas to existing provincial governments or in such other way as may seem most reasonable". The possibility of partition implied in Attlee's statement became a fact in less than six months.

Azad's explanation of Congress's acceptance of partition is as follows: Mountbatten "*sowed the seeds of the idea*" in the minds of the Congress leaders. (p. 197) Patel, his first convert, spoke to Azad in such terms that he sounded "*an even greater supporter of the two nation theory than Jinnah*". (p. 201) "*Jinnah may have raised the flag of partition,*" writes Azad, "*but now the real flag bearer was Patel.*" Nehru was the next to yield. Mountbatten's successful bid to win him was effectively aided by Lady Mountbatten, who was "*not only extremely intelligent*" but also possessed "*a most attractive and friendly temperament*". (p. 198) Another person who worked on Nehru on Mountbatten's behalf was Krishna Menon. Mountbatten had "*immediately perceived that Jawaharlal had a weakness for Krishna Menon and could be influenced by him*". Patronising Menon, Mountbatten used him to persuade "Jawaharlal to accept his scheme of partition of India". (pp. 199-200)

After Nehru succumbed to the influence of the Mountbattens and Menon, he came to Azad "*and asked me to give up my opposition to partition*". (p. 202) But the Maulana was unmoved. "*I told Jawaharlal that I could not possibly accept his views.*" (p. 202)

The Mahatma now remained Azad's "*only hope*". Azad called on Gandhi on March 31, 1947, the day on which the latter arrived in Delhi from Patna. Before Azad could say anything to him, Gandhi (according to Azad) asked the Maulana: "Will you stand by me or have you also changed? It seems Vallabhbhai and even Jawaharlal have surrendered (to the idea of partition)." Azad claims he replied: "*If you stand against partition, we may yet save the situation. If you however acquiesce, I am afraid India is lost.*" To this Gandhi is supposed to have said: "What a question to ask! If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body." (p. 203)

After the Gandhi-Azad talk (to continue the Maulana's story), the Mahatma went to see Mountbatten. "*Sardar Patel came to him (Gandhi) soon after he (Gandhi) returned from his first meeting with Mountbatten and was closeted with him for over two hours.*" At this meeting, Patel succeeded in changing Gandhi's stand. When Azad next met him, the Mahatma gave him "*the greatest shock of my life*" by repeating the arguments in favour of partition that Patel had been using with the Maulana. (p. 204) Gandhi too had "defected" and the situation was lost.

This story is fictitious. It is on record that Patel and Nehru *and Azad* had reconciled themselves to partition before Mountbatten's arrival in India. The Mountbattens arrived in New Delhi on the afternoon of March 22. The Congress Working Committee's resolution proposing the division of Punjab was passed in New Delhi on March 8, with Kripalani in the chair. In passing this resolution, the Working Committee was, by implication, proposing also the division of Bengal and accepting the division of India as a whole. Among those present on March 8 were Nehru, Patel - *and Azad*. Newspaper files of the period confirm Azad's participation. The only person who dissented was Kripalani.<sup>1</sup> Azad did not voice any disagreement with the resolution.

Evidently wanting Jinnah also to get the message that Congress was now ready to accept Pakistan (but of truncated size), Patel wrote on March 4 - four days before the Working Committee's resolution - to a close friend of Jinnah's, Kanji Dwarkadas:

"If the League insists on Pakistan, the only alternative is the division of the Punjab and Bengal. They cannot have the Punjab as a whole or Bengal."<sup>2</sup>

V.P. Menon's *The Transfer of Power in India* records his talk with Patel "late in December 1946 or early in January 1947" in which

Patel signified his acceptance of Pakistan.<sup>3</sup> Right in stating that Patel was willing to let go of Muslim-majority areas, Azad is wrong in linking this willingness to Mountbatten's arrival; and Azad's suppression of the March 8 resolution and of his own role in it is in character with the rest of *IWF*.

Gandhi, who was in Bihar at the time, disliked the March resolution (which was passed without his being informed or consulted) and wrote questioning it to both Nehru and Patel. But the fact that he wrote to Patel only on March 22, a fortnight after the event, and to Nehru also at about the same time, shows Gandhi's awareness that his views no longer counted in the Congress High Command. He did not expect the decision to be altered.

The move Gandhi did make, as is well-known, was to ask Mountbatten to let Jinnah lead and select a Government for all of India. Congress, said Gandhi, would not use its majority in the Assembly against Jinnah provided the latter was working for "the interests of the Indian people as a whole"; and it would accept Mountbatten in his personal capacity as the sole referee of what was or was not in India's interests. Gandhi made this proposal to Mountbatten on April 1 and to Nehru, Azad, Patel and the others of the Congress Working Committee immediately thereafter. The *TOP* volumes contain much material on the exertions of Mountbatten, V.P. Menon, other aides of the Viceroy and Krishna Menon directed at dissuading the Congress Working Committee from accepting the Gandhi plan. Their advice fell on receptive ears, for Nehru and Patel were not enthusiastic about a Jinnah-Mountbatten Government. On April 11, Gandhi conceded defeat. He wrote to Mountbatten:

"I had several short talks with Pandit Nehru and an hour's talk with him alone, and then with several members of the Working Committee last night about the formula I had sketched before you...I am sorry to say that I failed to carry any of them with me except Badshah Khan."<sup>4</sup>

Azad, who says in *IWF* that there was no question of his giving up his opposition to partition, did not support the Gandhi plan. The only one who did was Badshah Khan (Ghaffar Khan).

According to Azad, Mountbatten had told him that "if the Congress accepted Gandhiji's suggestion", partition could still be avoided. (p. 203) But in fact this is not what Mountbatten told him. According to Mountbatten's record of the interview with Azad, which took place on April 2, it was Azad who "staggered" Mountbat-

ten by expressing the view that Gandhi's was a feasible plan. This opinion did not delight Mountbatten, who however succeeded in eliciting Azad's agreement to the view that other solutions might be more practical. Taken together, Gandhi's letter to Mountbatten of April 11 and Mountbatten's account of April 2 of his interview with Azad suggest that the Viceroy may have played a part in Azad's failure to back the Gandhi plan during the Working Committee discussions.<sup>5</sup>

Azad recounts, as we have noted, two conversations with Gandhi. One took place, he says, on March 31. For the other he gives no date, but it occurred "when I met Gandhiji again", shortly after Patel's supposed "two-hour" talk with Gandhi on March 31. (p. 203) The *Hindustan Times* of April 4 tells us that Azad talked with Gandhi the previous morning. We may take it, therefore, that it was on April 3 that the second of the conversations recorded in *IWF* took place. In this conversation, according to Azad, a changed Gandhi repeats Vallabhbhai's arguments in favour of partition and informs Azad of the failure of his plan. Gandhi adds that he has informed Mountbatten of his defeat. (pp. 203-4) The whole story has to be false, for it was only on April 11 that Gandhi conceded defeat to Mountbatten.

There was no two-hour meeting between Gandhi and Patel during this period. The diary of Patel's daughter Maniben, who entered a detailed record of her father's day, shows that Patel and the Mahatma had a half-hour talk on April 1 and another 30-minute meeting on April 2. On the morning of April 3 Patel left for Ahmedabad.

The impossibility of *IWF*'s Azad-Gandhi conversations is proved by the dates Azad gives to them. We cannot similarly test Azad's account (pp. 201-2) of his supposed talks on the question of partition with Patel and Nehru, for to these he gives no dates. But the account is inherently improbable in the light of the March 8 decision of the Working Committee. It is also of little significance. The expression of misgivings in separate *tete-a-tete* conversations with Nehru and Patel cannot prove that Azad took a stand against partition. What one says to another in *tete-a-tete* privacy is entirely different from a public statement or a vote cast during a debate. The first is an opinion - tentative, changeable and off the record. Only the second is part of history's data.

The suggestion that the Mountbattens influenced Jawaharlal to

agree to partition was refuted by Rajaji in 1959. Terming the charge "untrue and in bad taste", Rajagopalachari made the point underlined in these pages: "Partition had already been agreed to before Mountbatten arrived."<sup>6</sup>

After speaking of "Gandhiji's defection", Azad writes:

*Now that partition seemed generally accepted, the question of Bengal and Punjab assumed a new importance. Lord Mountbatten said that since partition was on the basis of Muslim majority areas and since both in Bengal and Punjab there were areas where the Muslims were in a clear minority, these provinces should also be partitioned. He however advised the Congress leaders not to raise the question at this stage and assured them that he would himself raise it at the appropriate time. (p. 205)*

But, as we have seen, Congress had already raised it, explicitly and without any objection from Azad, on March 8, well before Mountbatten's arrival. Azad's account seeks not only to revise facts but also to reverse chronology.

However, Azad's claim in *IWF* 1988 (p. 196) that he tried to persuade Mountbatten to revive the Cabinet Mission Plan is corroborated by the latter. Mountbatten has recorded that on April 14 Azad proposed to him: "Let both the Congress and the Muslim League agree that they will accept your reading of the (Cabinet Mission Plan), not in your capacity as the Viceroy but in your personal capacity." (*TOP* 10, p. 234) But Vallabhbhai and Nehru opposed the proposal, Mountbatten paid no attention to it, and Azad "did not press the point further". (*IWF* 1988, p. 196)

### DID AZAD PROPOSE A TWO-YEAR WAIT?

Continues Azad:

*Before Gandhiji left for Patna, I made a last appeal to him. I pleaded with him that the present state of affairs might be allowed to continue for two years....I reminded him that two years is not a long time in a nation's history. (p. 205)*

Three considerations suggest that this account is false. Azad

could not have spoken as above shortly before April 12, which is when Gandhi left Delhi for Patna, for two months and two days after April 12, on June 14 to be exact, Azad made the following statement before the AICC:

"I told the Viceroy that the country could brook no delay and the question should be settled either way at once....A settlement must be reached at all costs to make the British quit at the earliest."<sup>7</sup>

The March 8 resolution is the second consideration that makes Azad's statement improbable. The third is that Gandhi was no longer Congress's decision-maker. Having elicited, ten months earlier, the Working Committee's opinion that there was no need to detain Gandhi amidst them, Azad knew better than anyone else that Gandhi had been thrust to the wings. If he had desired a two-year wait, Azad would have advocated it before the Working Committee or the AICC.

#### AZAD'S "MAY 14 MEETING WITH MOUNTBATTEN"

*After the Congress Working Committee concluded its session on 4 May (writes Azad), I went up to Simla. After a few days Lord Mountbatten also came up. He wanted to have a brief respite before his departure for London. His plan was to return to Delhi on 15 May and leave for London on the 18th. I thought I would make a last attempt to save the Cabinet Mission Plan and accordingly, on the night of 14 May, I met him at Viceregal Lodge.*

*We had discussions lasting for over an hour....I appealed to him... that the solution of the political problem may be deferred for a year or two. Once the country was divided.....there would be no retracing of the step.*

*Lord Mountbatten assured me that...he would tell the British Cabinet that there was an important section of the Congress which wanted postponement of a settlement by a year or two.\* (p. 206)*

Every sentence and statement quoted above is false. Mountbatten did not follow Azad to Simla; he preceded Azad. Mountbatten arrived in Simla on May 6, Azad on May 11. Mountbatten did not go for a respite before his trip to London; he did not know at the time



that he would be going to London. HMG's invitation to him to visit London was received by Mountbatten on May 15, after "the May 14 meeting". Finally, Azad did not meet Mountbatten in Simla on the night of 14 May. He could not have, for Mountbatten had returned to Delhi on the afternoon of May 14, having left Simla early that morning. The cable inviting Mountbatten to London reached him 12 hours after his return to Delhi. While in Simla he was unaware of his having to go to the U.K. In fact there is no evidence anywhere of any Mountbatten-Azad meeting in Simla, neither in the TOP volumes, nor in Alan Campbell-Johnson's diary of the Mountbatten Viceroyalty, nor in any of the newspapers of the time. The whole account is pure concoction.<sup>8\*</sup>

### THE WORKING COMMITTEE ACCEPTS PARTITION

The Plan under which India was freed and divided, the Mountbatten Plan of popular usage, was spelt out in an HMG statement shown to Indian leaders on June 2. Meeting that afternoon and night, the Congress Working Committee accepted it. According to the *Indian Annual Register*, January-June 1947, the following members attended this Working Committee session: Kripalani (President), Nehru, Azad, Patel, Prasad, Sarojini Naidu, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Rajagopalachari, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Kidwai, P.C. Ghosh, Shankarrao Deo, Jugal Kishore and Partap Singh. Some special invitees also attended this historic meeting. They included Gandhi, Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr Khan Sahib, Rammanohar Lohia, Pattabhi Sitaramayya and Jairamdas Doulatram.

Three of the participants, Azad, Kripalani and Lohia, have left an account of this session. File G/43 of 1947 in the AICC Papers also contains a record of the proceedings. Lohia's was published in his *Guilty Men* in 1960, Kripalani's in his *Gandhi* in 1970. Lohia's account was a response to the story Azad gives in *IWF*. Kripalani refers to Azad's version. According to Azad, Gandhi

\* Azad's account of this "May 14 meeting with Mountbatten" is extensively quoted in Seervai's *Constitutional Law of India*, Supplement, pp. 116-7.

*spoke openly in the Working Committee in favour of partition. As I had already had an inkling into his mind, this did not take me by surprise, but one can imagine the reaction of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He was completely stunned and for several minutes he could not utter a word. He then...repeatedly said that the Frontier would regard it as an act of treachery if the Congress now threw the Khudai Khidmatgars to the wolves. (p. 210)*

Azad says no more. There is nothing in his account to indicate his stand during the Working Committee discussions. Kripalani's account reads as follows:

"The Working Committee met in a tense atmosphere....The Viceroy's proposals were accepted without much discussion. As a matter of fact Jawaharlal and Vallabhbhai were already committed to the Viceroy's proposals ....Gandhiji's views were well-known. He did not want the partition of India in any shape or form. The only member of the Working Committee who voted against the decision was Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan....Almost in tears he said, "Ham to tabah ho gaye." I have no doubt that this was a great betrayal of our Frontier comrades in the freedom fight even though I was a party to it."

Adds Kripalani:

"In his book *India Wins Freedom* Maulana Azad has said that he was against partition and that he had made his opposition clear to Gandhiji. I do not know what private conference he had with Gandhiji. All I know is that he never opposed it in the Working Committee or the AICC." (pp. 286-89)

Let us look at Lohia's account:

"I would like to describe the meeting of the Congress Working Committee which accepted the scheme of partition. Two of us socialists, Mr Jayaprakash Narayan and I, were specially invited to this meeting. Barring us two, Mahatma Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, none spoke a single word against partition.

"Maulana Azad sat in a chair throughout... this meeting in a corner of the very small room which packed us all, puffed away at his endless cigarettes and spoke not a word.

"Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan spoke a bare two sentences. He expressed his sorrow over the fact that his colleagues had accepted the scheme of partition. As a small mercy he wanted them to find out if the proposed plebiscite in the N.W.F.P. could include the alternative

of independence alongside of the two other choices of accession to India or Pakistan.

"Mr Jayaprakash Narayan spoke some brief but definite remarks against partition in a single stretch and was silent for the rest of the meeting.

"My own opposition to partition was persistent and vocal but it could not have been serious enough....The absence of serious opposition to partition even from a man like me who had absolutely no selfish axes to grind showed the depths of weakness and fear to which our people and I, as an ordinary one among them, had fallen.

"I should especially like to bring out two points that Gandhiji made at this meeting. He turned to Mr Nehru and Sardar Patel in mild complaint that they had not informed him of the scheme before committing themselves to it....Mr Nehru intervened with some passion to say that he had kept him fully informed. On Mahatma Gandhi repeating that he did not know of the scheme of partition, Mr Nehru slightly altered his earlier observation. He said that Noakhali was so far away....

"Keeping turned towards Messrs Nehru and Patel, Gandhiji made his second point. He wanted the Congress party to honour the commitments made by its leaders. He would therefore ask the Congress to accept the principle of partition. After accepting the principle, Congress should ask the British Government and the Viceroy to step aside once the Congress and the Muslim League had signified their acceptance of partition.

"This was a grand tactical stroke. Dr Khan Saheb, the brother of the Frontier Gandhi, was the first and only one to shout the proposal out as utterly impracticable. There was no need for anyone else to oppose the proposal. It was not considered. I remonstrated with Dr Khan that the beauty of the proposal lay precisely in its impracticability. Dr Khan could not realise that the impossible Mr Jinnah could, under Gandhiji's proposal, save India precisely because of his impossibility." (pp. 20-23)

According to the AICC File, Gandhi said that though "he did not agree with the decisions of the Working Committee regarding the division of India, he did not want to take any step which would stand in the way". While the AICC File records Jayaprakash's dissatisfaction, it contains not a word to suggest that Azad expressed his unhappiness.

Along with these accounts, the following facts should be con-

sidered. One, Azad's statement was published posthumously, while Kripalani and Lohia were around to face any rebuttals of their versions. Two, many who had attended the June 1947 Working Committee meeting were living when Lohia's account was published, including Nehru, Kripalani, Prasad, Rajaji, Ghaffar Khan, J.P., Jairamdas and Kamaladevi. Three, some of them were alive when Kripalani's version appeared. None of them controverted Lohia's or Kripalani's account. Looking at all the evidence, the following conclusions appear to be beyond doubt.

Ghaffar Khan was the only Working Committee member to oppose partition. Three non-members, Gandhi, J.P. and Lohia spoke disapprovingly of it, with J.P. and Lohia using stronger language than Gandhi's. Though still looking for ways to defeat Mountbatten's scheme of partition, Gandhi did not defy Nehru and Patel. And Azad expressed no disapproval of partition.

#### THE AICC ACCEPTS PARTITION

*The AICC (writes Azad) met on 14 June 1947....Congress was now considering an official resolution for dividing the country. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant moved the resolution and after Sardar Patel and Jawaharlal spoke on it, Gandhiji had to intervene....*

*It was impossible for me to tolerate this abject surrender on the part of the Congress. In my speech I clearly said that the decision which the Working Committee had reached was the result of a most unfortunate development....*

*After the first day's debate, there was very strong feeling against the Working Committee's resolution. Neither Pandit Pant's persuasiveness nor Sardar Patel's eloquence had been able to persuade the people to accept this resolution....It therefore became necessary for Gandhiji to intervene in the debate....*

---

Persuaded by the tenor of Azad's misreport in *IWF*, Scervai says in his *Constitutional Law of India* (Supplement) that the Working Committee accepted partition "in spite of" Azad's "opposition". (p. 103)

*When the resolution was put to the vote, 29 voted for it and 15 against. Even Gandhiji's appeal could not persuade more members to vote for the partition of the country! (pp. 215-6)*

It is true that the resolution was passed. It is also true that it was moved by Pant. All the other statements in the preceding extract are false. The AICC debated the resolution on two days, June 14 and June 15. Gandhi did not "intervene" after the "failure" of Nehru, Patel and Pant to persuade the house; he spoke on the first day, as did Azad, well before Patel and Nehru, who both spoke on the second day. The resolution was passed not 29 to 15 but 157 to 29, with 32 others not voting."<sup>9</sup>

There are important suppressions in Azad's account. He does not admit that it was he and Kripalani, the President, who invited Gandhi to speak. He does not acknowledge that two Congress Muslims, Maulana Hifzur Rahman and Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew, opposed the resolution on the opening day, the former doing so "vehemently" and the latter calling it "a surrender to communalism".<sup>10</sup> Finally, Azad withholds the fact that he asked the AICC to vote for the resolution. Actually he seconded it!<sup>11</sup>

This is what Azad said:

The Cabinet Mission Scheme was better than the partition proposal but he supported the resolution because a settlement must be reached at all costs to make the British quit at the earliest....A concession has to be made to the Muslim League's obstinacy. He had told the Viceroy that the country could brook no delay and the question should be settled either way at once. The seceding parts would hurry back to the union.<sup>12</sup>

These remarks of his do not find place in *IWF*. Azad's paraphrasing of Gandhi's remarks at the meeting also leaves out noteworthy points. Gandhi had told the AICC that he "would have declared rebellion single-handed" against the Working Committee if he had felt that he was strong or if an alternative leadership existed:

"But I cannot challenge the present Congress leadership and demolish the people's faith in it unless I am in a position to tell them, 'Here is an alternative leadership.' I have not the time to build up such an alternative....I must therefore swallow the bitter pill."<sup>13</sup>

## PARTITIONING THE ASSETS

*A problem which faced Lord Mountbatten (writes Azad) was the partition of the Secretariat and the assets of the Government of India. There were difficulties even about the Provinces....In the case of Provinces which were divided, this task was even more difficult. Lord Mountbatten personally supervised most of the arrangements and the Committee which he appointed for the purpose settled every question as soon as it arose. (p. 219)*

A conspicuous omission in Azad's account of the partitioning of the Raj's personnel, records, armed forces, railways, cash reserves, debts and government institutions is the role of Patel, who along with Prasad represented India on the Partition Council. Jinnah and Liaquat sat on the Council for Pakistan. In effect, Patel was India's Minister for Partition as well, apart from being in charge of Home and the States, and guided with remarkable efficiency the officials who sorted out the mechanics of partition.

What does Azad say about Patel's success in integrating the more than 500 princely states into India? Nothing.

## PRASAD AND THE DIVISION OF THE ARMED FORCES

*The question arose (writes Azad) whether the Army should be divided immediately or should serve under a unified command for two or three years....I pressed for a unified command and I wish to bring it on record that Lord Mountbatten fully supported the stand. I am convinced that if the Army had remained unified we would have avoided the rivers of blood which flowed immediately after independence.*

*My colleagues did not agree with me and opposed me violently. What surprised me most was the opposition of Dr Rajendra Prasad....He now took the lead in insisting on a division of the Army. He said that if India was divided into two States, a unified Army should not and could not continue even for a day. (pp. 219-20)*

Azad does not say where or when he pressed for a unified Army. The records contain no reference to any effort on his part for a unified Army. Patel and Prasad, who were India's representatives on the Partition Council, and Rajagopalachari, who served as alternative member, did nothing unexpected when they favoured a communal division of the Army, with the option of voluntary transfer of individuals. Such a division, along with the option of voluntary transfer, was the unanimous recommendation of the Armed Forces Reconstitution Sub-Committee of the Partition Council.<sup>14</sup> Neither Indian nor Pakistani nor British members questioned the communal division or the proviso to it. Had Azad proposed a unified Army, Jinnah would have opposed it as vehemently as, according to Azad, Prasad did.

The "division of the Army on the basis of communities" led, Azad says, to terrible results.

*When after 15 August the blood of innocent men and women flowed on both sides of the frontier, the Army remained passive spectators. (p. 220)*

But there had been communal killings before the British left and before the Army was divided on communal lines - for instance, during the Direct Action launched by the League in the summer of 1946. Amalendu Ray has pointed out that, referring to that period, Azad himself writes in *IWF*:

*Throughout Calcutta, the military and the police were standing by but remained inactive while innocent men and women were being killed.*<sup>15</sup> (p. 169)

### HOW GANDHI "BUILT UP PRASAD"

Going back a quarter century, Azad relates how, as he sees it, Prasad and Patel came into the limelight.

*When Gandhiji came to Bihar, he found that the political leadership was in the hands of the Muslims and at first no Hindu of any position came to join him.*

*Many prominent Hindus...told Gandhiji that they would join the non-cooperation movement provided Gandhiji elected a Hindu as the leader... Babu Rajendra Prasad's name was then suggested to Gandhiji and in the course of a few years he became an all-India figure with Gandhiji's help and support. (p. 234)*

The non-cooperation movement was launched by Gandhi in 1920. His friendship with Prasad began earlier. It had started in Champaran in 1917.<sup>16</sup> In April 1918 Prasad visited Kheda in Gujarat where Gandhi and Patel were leading a peasants' struggle. At a meeting in Karamsad on April 4, 1918, Gandhi referred to Prasad, who was present, and said:

"My own brothers are dead; but we have here Shri Rajendra Babu, on seeing whom I forget their loss. He has given me love such as I can never forget."<sup>17</sup>

According to Azad, however, Prasad's name was "suggested" to Gandhi in 1920 - two years after the Karamsad speech - by Hindus anxious to ensure that a Hindu led the non-cooperation movement in Bihar.

### "GANDHI PICKED UP PATEL"

*Sardar Patel (writes Azad) was one of the many lawyers of Gujarat with hardly any interest or place in the public life of the country. When Gandhiji settled in Ahmedabad, he picked up Patel and step by step built him up....It was Gandhiji who made him a member of the Congress Working Committee. Again, it was because of Gandhiji that he became President of the Congress in 1931. (pp. 234-5)*

This churlish statement ignores Patel's strength and standing in Gujarat, the history of the start of the Gandhi-Patel relationship and the 1928 Bardoli battle led by Patel. The Azad of *IWF* is in fact as unaware of Bardoli as he is of Champaran. Patel became a member of the Working Committee at the end of 1922, when Gandhi was in prison. It was because of Gandhi that Patel did *not* become Congress President at the end of 1929. At Gandhi's instance he withdrew, despite the demand for his installation generated by the Bardoli satyagraha, and Nehru became President. His assumption of the



Presidentship at the start of 1931 was a corollary of his standing down in 1929-30.

## THE COMMUNAL RIOTS

Azad pays a tribute to the role of South Indian troops in quelling communal riots in North India following partition. The tribute is preceded by this statement:

*We therefore took measures for bringing in soldiers from the South more rapidly. (p. 229)*

There is evidence elsewhere, however, that it was Patel who brought in the soldiers from the south. Controlling the disturbances was after all the function of the Home Minister. K. Santhanam, who was in Delhi in 1947, has recorded:

"The Sikh and Rajput soldiers who were supposed to protect Delhi indulged in attacking Muslims and though the Sardar was supposed to be anti-Muslim, he felt about the atrocities against Muslims in Delhi as much as he felt about the atrocities against Hindus in Punjab. It was only when the Madras Regiment which he had summoned had come to Delhi and replaced the Sikh and Rajput Regiments that he felt secure."<sup>18</sup>

## GANDHI'S LAST FAST

After referring to the hardships and insecurities of the Muslims of Delhi in the winter of 1947-8, Azad writes:

*At last Gandhiji could not tolerate this state of affairs and sent for me to say that he had no weapon but to fast till peace was restored in Delhi...In a sense the fast was directed against the attitude of Sardar Patel and Patel knew that this was so....*

*On the evening of the first day's fast Jawaharlal, Sardar Patel and I were sitting by Gandhiji's side. Sardar Patel was leaving for Bombay the next morning. He spoke to Gandhiji in a formal manner and complained that there was no real issue for such a fast....He*

*spoke harshly to Gandhiji....Sardar Patel's tone even more than his words deeply grieved me. (pp. 232-6)*

Let us first dispose of two simple inaccuracies. Gandhi did not send for Azad to announce his fast. He announced it at the end of his prayers on the evening of January 12. Until then neither Azad nor Nehru nor Patel was aware of Gandhi's plan. Secondly, Patel was not due to leave on the morning after the first day of the fast. The first day of the fast was January 13. Patel was to leave, and did leave, on the morning of January 15.

Azad's view that the fast was directed at Patel was shared by some others also. When he heard of such an impression, Gandhi chided those who were "isolating the Sardar and making a scapegoat of him" and attempting to "call my fast a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry". "My fast," Gandhi added, "is undoubtedly on behalf of the Muslim minority in the Union. It is also on behalf of the minorities in Pakistan."<sup>19</sup>

Azad is entitled to disbelieve Gandhi's explanation for his fast but not to suppress it. Also suppressed in Azad's account is the fact that shortly after he had announced the fast, Gandhi asked for the payment of Rs 55 crores to Pakistan to implement the division of assets earlier agreed to. With Nehru's full approval, the Indian Cabinet had decided to withhold this payment because of the conflict that had broken out in Kashmir. Following the commencement of Gandhi's fast and at his instance the decision was reversed. It was the reversal of this decision that Nehru had earlier backed that pained Patel and provoked harsh words from him.<sup>20</sup> But the episode of the 55 crores is left out by Azad.

### AZAD'S LAST MEETING WITH GANDHI

Following assurances from Delhi's Hindus and Sikhs regarding the safety and sanctity of Muslim lives and places of worship, Gandhi broke his fast on January 18. On January 20 a grenade was thrown at him but it missed its target and damaged a wall.

*On 30 January 1948 (writes Azad), I went to Gandhiji at 2.30 p.m. There were several important things I had to discuss and I sat with him for over an hour. (p. 241)*

Gandhi's last day has been extensively described in Pyarelal's *Last Phase*, in Manu Gandhi's *The End of an Epoch* and in Brij Krishna Chandiwalla's *Gandhiji ki Dilli Diary*. Those who visited him that day are all named or described: Rajan Nehru, Maulana Hifzur Rahman and other Delhi Muslims, a group of the blind, Sikh and Hindu refugees from West Punjab, Chandwani, the writer R.K. Mukerjee, a French photographer, Dr De Silva of Ceylon and his daughter, Brij Bhan from the Punjab States, and others. But there is no reference to Azad. He did *not* call on Gandhi on January 30, 1948. A search through newspapers and diaries reveals that Azad's last meeting with Gandhi took place on January 27 and not, as Azad so unfortunately claims, on January 30.<sup>21</sup>

The man who did have an hour's conversation with Gandhi on that fateful day was not Azad but Patel. Vallabhbhai was with him from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. At this meeting the unhappiness that had come between them was left behind and the comradeship of old resumed. Revising an earlier opinion, Gandhi told Vallabhbhai on January 30, as he had told Nehru earlier, that Jawaharlal and Patel were meant to continue together at India's helm.

Though dwelling on the differences between Gandhi and Patel in the months following independence, Azad makes no mention of the final, reconciling meeting, after which the Mahatma was shot.

## GANDHI'S ASSASSINATION

*The prayer meetings (writes Azad) were not held in an open field but on the lawns of Birla House. This was a place surrounded on all sides by walls. Nobody could enter it except through the gate. It was the easiest thing for the police to check people as they came in or out ....Local officials looked at Sardar Patel and when they found that he issued no special orders for Gandhiji's safety, they did not think it necessary to take any special measures. (pp. 243-4)*

The orders that Patel issued after the January 20 incident and the special measures that the Delhi police took as a result are on record and were described to Parliament on February 5, 1948. These proved inadequate. However, when Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia charged that the Government of India had been negligent,

Rajagopalachari, by now the Governor of West Bengal, defended the P.M. and the Deputy Premier, who was also the Home Minister:

"Have there not been scores of occasions when he (the Mahatma) was in the greatest of danger during these 40 years, in South Africa and India? Did the Government of India protect his life? During the last few years did not the greatest anger and highest passion develop like a storm, and did he not live? Did the Government of India protect him? Is it not idiotic to blame the Government of India when God has taken him away?"<sup>22</sup>

But Azad, silent on the subject in January and February 1948, blames Patel when he is not there to defend himself.

## Chapter Seven

### *What Remains of India Wins Freedom - and of Azad*

In his Introduction to the American edition of *IWF*, Louis Fischer constructs a neat aphorism: "The fight for freedom, under moral leadership, breeds giants. The task of governing, through compromise, cuts them down to normal size." (p. xxi) Our scrutiny suggests that the urge to leave a record can shrink them into dwarfs.

Why the falsification? Disappointment and guilt goaded Azad into reconstructing the past. His "shattered health" at the time of doing so, to quote Kabir's phrase in the Preface to *IWF*, played its insidious part, and Azad was seduced into stepping out of the real world and inhabiting the make-believe world he had created. Such, for what it is worth, is the present writer's conclusion.

Though above the crowd and refusing to rub shoulders with it, Azad was not above desiring its adulation. Fame was his goal in childhood. One of his sisters, Fatima Begum, recalled that as a boy Azad "would climb a raised platform and ask his sisters to surround him and applaud him and then get down and walk off slowly and deliberately".<sup>1</sup>

The goal was not jettisoned as he grew older, and *Al Hilal's* heady success, when Azad was in his twenties, only confirmed Azad's picture of himself at the centre of a raised platform. In 1920-21, when he was only 32, Azad was "commonly known among the Muslims of India as Imam-ul-Hind", or Leader of India, and Muslim scholars and divines came close to electing him formally as the Imam of India's Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Before he was fully 35 he presided over a session of the Indian National Congress. No one younger had received or would receive the honour.

The years that followed had their ups and downs but early in 1940 Azad was Congress President again, a position he occupied for six consecutive years. Four of these were spent in prison, but Azad did not permit incarceration to injure the dignity of his status. "Maulana by position is the foremost citizen of this abode," Pattabhi noted in Ahmednagar Jail,<sup>3</sup> and Nehru too marked Azad's attitude of conscious eminence.<sup>4</sup> The change from 1940-46, when he was the chief, to a position where Nehru, Patel and Prasad exceeded him in both influence and rank, and the denial of his hopes for re-election in 1946, seemed to wound Azad, and he hit back in *IWF* with a story of other people's mistakes - real, exaggerated or imaginary - and of how the mistakes might have been prevented if only the 1940-46 equation had been allowed to continue.

This did not suffice, however. For his self-image Azad needs to be the Prime Mover even if he is not the Chief, and the Wisest even if he is not the Prime Mover. So the Poona Offer of July 1940 becomes "my proposal". It is he who "persuades Gandhi to agree to the individual satyagraha movement" of late 1940. His "interview with Lord Wavell creates a new atmosphere" in 1945 (p. 113). He secures the release of J.P. and the other socialists. The RIN mutineers are calmed by him. It is essentially his scheme that the Cabinet Mission presents as the May 16 Plan and his speech that influences the AICC into accepting the Plan. It is he who propels Nehru into the Congress President's chair. His letter to Cripps elicits the Viceroy's invitation for a Congress Government. And for peace in Delhi he brings the South Indian regiment.

When others call the shots and his advice is not followed, the results are unfortunate. "*I realised that my reading of the situation had proved correct.*" (p. 92) "*Later events proved that my apprehensions were correct.*" (p. 97) "*This was no surprise to me.*" (p. 98) "*Everything I had then said has come to happen.*" (p. 150) "*The mistake of 1937 was bad enough. The mistake of 1946 proved even more costly.*" The mistake of 1937 occurred because Nehru did not listen to Azad. The mistake of 1946 occurred because Azad did not listen to pleas that he should remain Congress President. "*Events turned out as I had expected.*" (p. 173) Patel rued his error in disregarding Azad's warning that Finance should not be offered to the League. Azad advised against partition, and everyone knows what followed its acceptance. He urged that the Army should not be divided; but it was, "and nothing could be done to stop the murder of innocent Hin-

dus and Muslims." (p. 207) "*Later events proved how justified my apprehensions were.*" (p. 216)

Unfaced guilt joins unfulfilled hope in demanding a rewritten, fantasized past. Not checking on their distinguished author's facts, the publishers of *IWF* 1988 composed a blurb that they will not be able to live down easily: "Many of us may not agree fully with Maulana Azad's forthright views on persons and events of the period, but we shall be compelled to admire anew the honesty and courage of a great son of India." Of *IWF*'s honesty no more remains to be said. Does it suggest courage? Azad wants Nariman as Bombay's Premier in 1937 but says not a word in Nariman's favour. He wants Syed Mahmud as Bihar's Premier but does little on Mahmud's behalf, and thereafter blames Prasad for being communal. He dislikes Quit India but cannot oppose it. Gandhi dares him to resign but Azad pockets the humiliation and presides at the passage of Quit India. He wants Bhulabhai Desai in the 1946 Central Assembly but votes in favour of his exclusion. He feels he should stay on as President in 1946 and "launch free India in its course" but is pushed into recommending Nehru's election. He believes in obligatory grouping but signs letters objecting to it. He wants the League to get the Home portfolio but submits to his colleagues' reluctance to part with it. He thinks the Gandhi plan of letting Jinnah form a Government may save a united India but allows the Working Committee to disown it. He dislikes the partition plan but does not even whisper against it in the Working Committee. When the AICC meets, he seconds the resolution in the plan's favour. He regards as "one of the greatest frauds" the notion that "religious affinity can unite areas which are geographically, linguistically and culturally different", (*IWF*, p. 248) but never says so in plain terms while he is alive.<sup>5</sup>

Inability to fight for one's convictions is very human, but the unwillingness to admit one's weakness can have strange consequences. In Azad's case, it fuelled a revision of the past. Unprepared to blame himself, Azad had to suppress his failures and exaggerate his colleagues' mistakes. *IWF* is evidence not of courage but of its lack; it is a story not of how India won her freedom but of how Azad lost his spine. Not examining its facts, *India Today* called *IWF* "poignant".<sup>6</sup> "Pathetic" is an apter adjective.

*IWF*'s Azad is the classic crybaby. "*I had done my best but my friends and colleagues did not support me.*" (p. 267)

When he looked back at his role in Congress's acceptance of partition and in assigning the N.W.F.P. to Pakistan, Kripalani wrote: "This was a great betrayal of our Frontier comrades though I was party to it."<sup>7</sup> Lohia, when he cast a glance at the past, spoke of his weakness. But Azad does not own up. He was not always thus. Asked, not long after partition, why he had never spoken a harsh word against Jinnah despite the latter's rudeness towards him, Azad replied with a sigh: "Why expose the scar on one's own heart? I was so incompetent that I could not restrain the Muslims of India from committing suicide. I alone am to blame."<sup>8</sup> This gallant Azad is dead in *IWF*.

A lack of magnanimity is another of *IWF*'s sad features. Khali-quzzaman commented on this lack: "One great drawback which attracts notice is the absence of any mention of his close association for a number of years with the Ali brothers, or even a passing reference to the services of Dr Ansari, whose house in Daryaganj was for a number of years his address in Delhi. Hakim Ajmal Khan whom the Maulana always regarded as a guide in all his personal and public affairs is named only once in a manner which is derogatory to the memory of (Ajmal Khan)."<sup>9</sup> Also slighted in *IWF* are the Frontier's Khan brothers. (pp. 182-3) Hindu colleagues too receive little praise. Indeed, apart from C.R. Das, who is lauded early on in *IWF*, and Gandhi, who is referred to in high terms at the end, no colleague receives unqualified appreciation.

The episode of Congress's representation for talks with the Cabinet Mission is revealing in this regard. Nehru's attempt to have a team rather than Azad alone negotiate with the Mission touched Azad to the quick. The episode provokes him into saying in *IWF*: "*Jawaharlal is however very vain and cannot stand that anyone else should receive greater support or admiration than he.*" (pp. 137-8) Whether or not true of Nehru, this remark, which was kept out of *IWF* 1959, may not have been without some applicability to Azad himself. If this surmise is true, then envy joined guilt and disappointment in siring *IWF*'s falsifications.

Bitterness was another factor. Azad nursed some lingering resentment towards Gandhi, who invited Azad to resign the Presidentship in 1942 and pressed him to vacate it in 1946; towards Nehru, who while warm and deferential towards Azad did not consult or heed him as much as Azad would have liked;<sup>10</sup> and towards Patel, who held to a clear and firm line and frequently crossed



Azad's will.

Finally, *IWF* may also have been influenced by Azad's age and health. Its author is one who is suddenly anxious about what the future might think. V.P. Menon's *The Transfer of Power in India*, acknowledging the roles in the creation of free India and Pakistan of Gandhi, Patel, Nehru, Jinnah, Mountbatten and Wavell, had come out early in 1957; it may have occasioned a desire in Azad to leave, while he was still alive, his version for posterity.

Humayun Kabir must take his share of blame for *IWF*'s errors. That these survived the several readings to which Kabir refers in the Preface is no tribute to his vigilance or sense of responsibility. It is noteworthy, moreover, that while Kabir speaks of many aspects of working on *IWF*'s draft, including "translation" and "amendments by addition and alteration as well as by omission", he makes no mention of having taken the trouble to verify its facts. Kabir refers to the "views", "findings", "opinions" and "judgments" in the book and says that these are Azad's. But as to its facts he says nothing.

Damaging though *IWF* is to Azad's reputation, much of the latter deserves to survive and will. *IWF*'s pitiable errors do not obliterate the assets we looked at in the Introduction - Azad's eloquent pen and tongue, his steadfast feet that never walked away from a composite nation, and his broad and scholarly mind that demonstrated that Hindu-Muslim partnership was an injunction of Islam. Let us also concede before further examining Azad's legacy that his *IWF* has at least sparked an interest in the causes of partition. Unfortunately little of the discussion that has ensued has been scholarly or objective or fresh. To many the subject of *IWF* is only an opportunity to throw up an old prejudice. But perhaps an honest search of the roots of the Hindu-Muslim divide and the India-Pakistan divide will be a spin-off of *IWF*. In its final paragraphs, *IWF* says some sensible (if obvious) and also some prescient things on the subject:

Can anyone deny (*Azad writes in 1957-8*) that the creation of Pakistan has not solved the communal problem but made it more intense and harmful? The basis of partition was enmity between Hindus and Muslims. The creation of Pakistan gave it a permanent constitutional form. The most regrettable feature of this situation is that the sub-continent of India is divided into two States that look at one another with hatred and fear....This has led both the States to increase their defence expenditure....

Mr Jinnah and his followers did not seem to realise that geography was against them. The Muslim majority areas were in the north-west and north-east. These two regions have no point of physical contact....No one can hope that East and West Pakistan can compose all their differences and form one nation. Even within West Pakistan the three provinces are working for separate aims and interest.

Nevertheless the die is cast. The new State of Pakistan is a fact. It is to the interest of India and Pakistan that they should develop friendly relations and act in cooperation with one another.

Disentangling Azad's true worth from the flaws of *IWF* should not be impossible, the wide circulation of the latter notwithstanding. Speaking of Azad's "unswerving and steady loyalty to his ideals of national independence and Hindu-Muslim unity," Kripalani adds: "No misrepresentation of his motives, no calumny, no insults from inferior persons - and he was a sensitive soul - could deflect him from the path he had chosen for himself."<sup>11</sup> Nehru was reminded by Azad of "the encyclopaedists, men of intellect, men of action". These comments and others in like vein were made before *IWF* came out and describe the Azad that India will continue to cherish. It is not possible to regard with anything except warmth and esteem the man who could say in 1923:

"If an angel descends from the heavens today and proclaims from the Qutab Minar that India can attain Swaraj within 24 hours provided I relinquish my demand for Hindu-Muslim unity, I shall retort to it: "No my friend. I shall give up Swaraj but not Hindu-Muslim unity, for if Swaraj is delayed, it will be a loss for India, but if Hindu-Muslim unity is lost, it will be a loss for the whole of mankind."

and in 1940:

"I am a Muslim and proud of the fact. Islam's splendid traditions of thirteen hundred years are my inheritance. In addition, I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality.

"I am indispensable to this noble edifice. Without me this splen-

did structure of India is incomplete.

"Everything bears the stamp of our joint endeavour. Our languages were different, but we grew to use a common language. Our manners and customs were dissimilar, but they produced a new synthesis....No fantasy or artificial scheming to separate and divide can break this unity."

His 1923 and 1940 Presidential addresses, from which these extracts are taken, his *Al Hilal* prose, his 1922 statement before the Raj's court that jailed him for a year, his November 1947 chastisement in Jama Masjid of the Muslims of Delhi who rued their support for Pakistan, *Ghubar-i-khatir*, the collection of unposted letters written during his 3-year imprisonment in Ahmednagar in the forties and his *Tarjuman*, the Qur'an in translation, are the works to remember Azad by, not *IWF*. The former will provide Azad continuing fame and deserve to be read and spread. *IWF*, by contrast, a warning against attempts to influence the mind of the future, does not deserve a place in libraries and reading rooms, not at any rate in shelves marked "history" or "politics". Years before *IWF* was composed, Azad had told the historian M. Mujeeb: "Writing about myself would be just ridiculous."<sup>12</sup> That view is debatable, but *IWF* was avoidable.

## *Sources and Bibliography*

It will be noticed from the list given below of material consulted that several of the individuals who feature in this book and in *IWF* have left their accounts. The sayings and doings of some others have been recorded by relatives or close associates. The Raj's documents and those of Congress and files of newspapers of the period fill many a remaining gap.

Private papers consulted include the Pyarelal Papers, the Syed Mahmud Papers and the diaries of Maniben Vallabhbhai Patel. The AICC Papers were studied, as also the Linlithgow Papers, files of the *Hindustan Times*, the *Hindu*, *Bombay Chronicle* and *Harijan*, and Oral History Transcripts of accounts by H.K. Mahtab and M.N. Masud. Published material consulted includes the following:

Ahmad, J., *Middle Phase of the Muslim Political Movement*, (Lahore: Publishers United, 1969).

Ahmad, J., *Creation of Pakistan*, (Lahore: Publishers United, 1976).

Azad, Abul Kalam, *India Wins Freedom* (Orient Longman, 1958).

Azad, Abul Kalam, *India Wins Freedom* (Orient Longman, 1988).

Azad, Abul Kalam, *India Wins Freedom* (New York: Longmans, 1960).

Campbell-Johnson, Alan, *Mission With Mountbatten* (London: Robert Hale, 1951).

Chandiwala, Brijkrishna, *Gandhiji ki Dilli Diary* (Three Volumes), (Delhi, 1970).

Datta, V.N., and Cleghorn, B., *A Nationalist Muslim in Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Macmillan, 1974).

Desai, Mahadev, *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad* (Agra, 1940).

- Dutt, B.C., *Mutiny of the Innocents* (Bombay: Sindhu, 1971).
- Dwarkadas, Kanji, *Ten Years to Freedom* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1968).
- Felton, Monica, *I Meet Rajaji* (London: Macmillan, 1962).
- Gandhi, M.K., *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*.
- Gandhi, M.K., *Letters to Sardar Patel* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1957).
- Gandhi, Manuben, *The End of an Epoch* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1962).
- Gandhi, Rajmohan, *The Rajaji Story* (Bombay: Bhavan, 1984).
- Ghosh, Sudhir, *Gandhi's Emissary* (New Delhi: Rupa, 1967).
- Glendevon, John, *The Viceroy at Bay* (London: Collins, 1971).
- Gopal, S., *Jawaharlal Nehru* (Three Volumes) (New Delhi: Oxford).
- Haq, Mushir U., *Muslim Politics in Modern India* (Meerut: Meerakshi, 1971).
- Kabir, Humayun, (ed.), *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: A Memorial Volume* (New York: Asia, 1959).
- Khaliquzzaman, Choudhry, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore: Pakistan Longman, 1961).
- Kripalani, J.B., *Gandhi: His Life and Thought* (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1970).
- Kulkarni, V.B. *The Indian Triumvirate* (Bombay: Bhavan, 1969).
- Lohia, Rammanohar, *Guilty Men of India's Partition* (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1960).
- Malsiani, Arsh, *Abul Kalam Azad* (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1976).
- Menon, V.P., *The Transfer of Power in India* (Calcutta: Orient Longman, 1957).
- Merriam, Allen Hayes, *Gandhi vs, Jinnah* (Calcutta: Minerva, 1980).
- Moon, Penderel, (ed.) *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal* (London: Oxford, 1973).
- Mujeeb, Muhammad, *The Indian Muslims* (London: George Allen and Unwin).
- Munshi, K.M., *Pilgrimage to Freedom* (Bombay: Bhavan, 1967).
- Nandurkar, G.M., (ed.), *Bapu, Sardar Ane Mahadevbhai* (Ahmedabad, 1978).
- Nandurkar, G.M., (ed.), *Sardarshri Ke Patra* (Ahmedabad, 1981).
- Nandurkar, G.M., (ed.), *This Was Sardar* (Ahmedabad, 1974).
- Nehru, Jawaharlal, *A Bunch of Old Letters* (Bombay: Asia, 1958).
- Nehru, Jawaharlal, *Selected Works* (ed. S. Gopal) (New Delhi:

- Orient Longman).
- Parikh, Narhari, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel* (Two Volumes) (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1956).
- Patel, Vallabhbhai, *Sardar Patel's Correspondence* (ed. Durga Das) (Ahmedabad).
- Peerzada, S.S., (ed.), *Leaders' Correspondence with Mr Jinnah* (Bombay: Taj Office, 1944).
- Philips, C.H., and Wainwright, M.D., (ed.), *The Partition of India* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970).
- Pirzada, S.S., *Some Aspects of Quaid-i-Azam's Life* (Islamabad, 1978).
- Prasad, Beni, *The Hindu-Muslim Questions* (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1941).
- Prasad, Rajendra, *Autobiography* (Bombay: Asia, 1957).
- Prasad, Rajendra, *Rajendra Prasad's Correspondence* (ed. Valmiki Choudhary) (New Delhi).
- Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase* (Two Volumes) (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1956 and 1958).
- Ray, Amalendu, *Inconsistencies in Azad* (Howrah: Bangavarati Granthalaya, 1968).
- Setalvad, M.C., *Bhulabhai Desai* (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1968).
- Sharma, Chaturbhuji, *Vidrohi ki Atmakatha* (Delhi: Atmaram, 1970).
- Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, *The History of the Congress* (Two Volumes) (Allahabad).
- Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, *Feathers and Stones* (Bombay: Padma, 1946).
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell, *Modern Islam in India* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1946).

## Notes and References

### Estimates of India Wins Freedom

Sources of quotes: Nehru - *Hindu*, February 8, 1959. Rajagopalachari - Monica Felton, *I Meet Rajaji* (London: Macmillan), pp. 179-80. Fischer - his Introduction to American edition of *India Wins Freedom* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1960). Lohia - Lohia, *Guilty Men of India's Partition* (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1960), p. 5. Kripalani - Kripalani, *Gandhi: His Life and Thought* (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1970), p. 291.

### Introduction

- 1 *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (New Delhi), Vol. 12, p. 611.
- 2 Kripalani's article in *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: A Memorial Volume* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1959).
- 3 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India* (London: Golancz, 1946), p. 218.
- 4 See Jayaprakash Narayan, *Towards Total Revolution*, (ed. Brahmanand) (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1978), Vol. 3, pp. 49-50.
- 5 Arsh Malsiani, *Abdul Kalam Azad* (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1976), p. 95.
- 6 Muhammad Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims* (London: George Allen and Unwin), pp. 461-63.
- 7 See, for example, Note 135 on p. 90 of *SWJN* 12.
- 8 Penderel Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 157 and 361.

- 9 Quoted in Malsiani, *Azad*.
- 10 Monica Felton, *I Meet Rajaji* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 177.
- 11 M.N. Masud, Oral History Transcript, Nehru Library, New Delhi, 1973, p. 67.
- 12 Masud, OHT, p. 66.
- 13 Ibid., pp. 66-7.
- 14 Ibid., pp. 67-8.
- 15 Quoted in Louis Fischer's Introduction to American edition of *India Wins Freedom* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1960).
- 16 *The Hindu*, February 8, 1959.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Masud, OHT, p. 68.
- 19 Ibid., pp. 36-7.
- 20 But Fischer's Introduction gives no source for this claim.

## Chapter One: Congress, the Raj and Jinnah

- 1 Narhari Parikh, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1956), Vol. 2, p. 235.
- 2 Ibid., p. 240.
- 3 See K.M. Munshi, *Pilgrimage to Freedom* (Bombay: Bhavan, 1967), pp. 45-6.
- 4 Parikh, *Patel*, Vol. 2, pp. 237-8.
- 5 V.N. Datta and B. Cleghorn, ed., *A Nationalist Movement in Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Macmillan, 1974).
- 6 Letter of August 31, 1938, Linlithgow Papers (Microfilm, Nehru Library, New Delhi).
- 7 *SWJN* 13, p. 500.
- 8 J. Ahmad, *Middle Phase of the Muslim Political Movement* (Lahore: Publishers United, 1969), p. 170.
- 9 S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru* (New Delhi: Oxford, 1976), Vol. 1, p. 224.
- 10 *Hindu*, February 8, 1959.
- 11 Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore: Pakistan Longman, 1961), pp. 167 and 163.
- 12 Chaturbhuj Sharma, *Vidrohi ki Atmakatha* (Delhi: Atmaram, 1970), p. 93.
- 13 Pyarelal, *The Last Phase* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1956), Vol. 1,



p. 80.

14 Munshi, *Pilgrimage*, p. 48.

15 Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway*, p. 160.

16 Article by S.R. Mehrotra, in Philips and Wainwright (ed.), *The Partition of India* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), p. 199 fn.

17 Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway*, pp. 161 and 166.

18 Munshi, *Pilgrimage*, p. 47.

19 *Hindu*, February 8, 1959.

## Chapter Two: The War Destroys an Equilibrium

1 Quoted in article by K.B. Sayeed, in *The Partition of India*, London, 1970, p. 286.

2 See *Hindu*, July 9, 1940.

3 *Harijan*, July 13, 1940, quoted in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi, Vol. 72, p. 256.

4 Letter of July 20, 1940 quoted in Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters* (Asia, 1958), pp. 446-7.

5 See Linlithgow's correspondence with the Secretary of State, Linlithgow Papers (Microfilm), Nehru Library, New Delhi.

6 CWMG 73, pp. 71-3.

7 See S. Gopal, *Nehru*, Vol. 1, p. 263.

8 See *Harijan* of January 15, 1942 and January 22, 1942 and the January 1942 file of *Hindu*.

9 On January 15, 1942. See CWMG 75, p. 225.

10 Rammanohar Lohia, *Guilty Men of India's Partition*, (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1960), p. 7.

11 See S. Gopal, *Nehru*, p. 280, citing *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. 1, pp. 479 and 514.

12 See S. Gopal, *Nehru*, Vol. 1, quoting from Molesworth's *Curfew On Olympus*.

## Chapter Three: Quit India and its Sequel

1 *The Transfer of Power*, London, Vol. 2 (hereinafter cited as *TOP* 2), pp. 158-63.

2 J.B. Kripalani, *Gandhi: His Life and Thought* (New Delhi: Publi-

- cations Division, 1970), p. 200.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Entry of May 3, 1943, Diary of Maniben Patel, Ahmedabad.
- 5 *SWJN* 13, pp. 582 ff.
- 6 See Patel quoted in *Hindustan Times*, July 30, 1942.
- 7 Letter from Gandhi to Nehru, July 13, 1942, *CWMG* 76, pp. 293-4.
- 8 Desai to Patel, July 15, 192, in Nandurkar, (ed.), *Bapu, Sardar ane Mahadevbhai* (Ahmedabad, 1978), pp. 206-8.
- 9 See S. Gopal, *Nehru*, Vol 1, p. 300, quoting from Hutchins, *Spontaneous Revolution*.
- 10 See *SWJN* 13, pp. 582ff. and H.K. Mahtab, Oral History Transcript, 1979, Nehru Library, New Delhi.
- 11 See *Harijan* July 19, 1942, quoted in *CWMG* 76, p. 295.
- 12 Mahtab, OHT, pp. 151-2.
- 13 Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway*, p. 251.
- 14 See S.S. Pirzada, *Some Aspects of Qaid-i-Azam's Life* (Islamabad, 1978), p. 62.
- 15 See Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *Feathers and Stones* (Bombay, 1946), pp. 374-7, and letter from Patel to Maniben, April 14, 1945, in Nandurkar, (ed.), *Sardarshri ke Patra* (Ahmedabad), Vol. 2, p. 392.
- 16 See Gandhi-Wavell Correspondence, June 14, 1945 to June 16, 1945, *TOP* 5, pp. 1129-30.
- 17 Moon, (ed.), *Wavell*, pp. 241-2.
- 18 Ibid., p. 216.
- 19 B.C. Dutt, *Mutiny of the Innocents* (Bombay: Sindhu, 1971), pp. 176-9.
- 20 Kripalani, *Gandhi*, pp. 22-3.
- 21 M.C. Setalvad, *Bhulabhai Desai* (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1968), p. 289.

#### Chapter Four: Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Azad

- 1 Kripalani, *Gandhi*, p. 248.
- 2 *ibid.*, p. 249.
- 3 Pyarelal Papers, New Delhi, File F4/33.
- 4 See articles by Pyarelal in *Indian Express* (New Delhi), August 12-15, 1967.

- 5 Kripalani, *Gandhi*, pp. 248-9.
- 6 Gandhi to Azad, April 29, 1946, Pyarelal Papers, File F4/33.
- 7 Azad to Gandhi, April 29, 1946, *ibid.*

## Chapter Five: Fatal Ambiguity

- 1 Resolutions of Congress, AICC and Working Committee, March 1940 to September 1946, published by Acharya Jugal Kishore, General Secretary, AICC, Allahabad.
- 2 *TOP* 7, p. 358.
- 3 Azad to Wavell, June 25, 1946, *TOP* 7, p. 1036.
- 4 Jinnah to Wavell, June 7, 1946, *TOP* 7, p. 837.
- 5 Report of Jinnah's interview with Wavell on June 25, 1946, *TOP* 7, p. 1045.
- 6 *TOP* 7, p. 1036.
- 7 *Ibid.*, pp. 465-6.
- 8 *Harijan*, May 26, 1946, quoted in *CWMG* 84, p. 171.
- 9 Pyarelal, *Last Phase*, Vol. 1, p. 239.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 234; Kripalani, *Gandhi*, p. 239; and Sudhir Ghosh, *Gandhi's Emissary* (New Delhi: Rupa, 1967), p. 168.
- 11 *TOP* 7, p. 990.
- 12 *Sardar Patel's Correspondence* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan), Vol. 3, pp. 153-5.
- 13 *TOP* 8, pp. 106-7.
- 14 *Hindu*, February 8, 1959.
- 15 J. Ahmad, *Creation of Pakistan* (Lahore: Publishers United, 1976), p. 278.
- 16 *TOP* 8, pp. 102-4.
- 17 Pyarelal, *Last Phase*, Vol. 2, p. 155.
- 18 Nandurkar, (ed.), *Bapu, Sardar Ane Mahadevbhai*, p. 333.
- 19 "I for one would not accept this suggestion," Gandhi to Patel, December 4, 1946, and other comments to Patel, *Letters to Sardar Patel* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1957), pp. 197-201.
- 20 Munshi, *Pilgrimage to Freedom*, p. 183.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 Nandurkar, (ed.), *Bapu, Sardar Ane Mahadevbhai*, p. 328.
- 23 Nehru's letter of December 19, 1946, to Sir John Colville, Acting Viceroy, in *SWJN* 1 (Second Series), p. 218.
- 24 See Moon (ed.), *Wavell*, p. 431.

25 Ibid., pp. 344-5 and 388-9.

## Chapter Six: The Acceptance of Partition

- 1 Kripalani, *Gandhi*, p. 279.
- 2 Letter quoted in Pyarelal, *Last Phase*, Vol. 2, p. 83 and in Kanji Dwarkadas, *Ten Years to Freedom* (Bombay, 1968), pp. 207-8.
- 3 V.P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (Orient Longmans, 1957), p. 358.
- 4 Pyarelal, *Last Phase*, Vol. 2, p. 84.
- 5 See *TOP* 10, p. 86.
- 6 Felton, *I Meet Rajaji*, p. 180.
- 7 *Hindustan Times*, June 15, 1947.
- 8 For date of Mountbatten's arrival in Simla, see Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission With Mountbatten*, p. 82. For date of Azad's arrival in Simla see *Hindustan Times*, May 12, 1947. For date of Mountbatten's departure, see Campbell Johnson, p. 91. For date of receipt of HMG's invitation to Mountbatten, see *TOP* 10, pp. 822-5.
- 9 See *Hindustan Times*, June 15, 1947 and June 16, 1947.
- 10 Ibid., June 15, 1947.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Kripalani, *Gandhi*, p. 288.
- 14 See *TOP* 12, pp. 113-4.
- 15 This has been taken from Amalendu Ray's *Inconsistencies of Azad*.
- 16 See *CWMG* 13, p. 391.
- 17 *CWMG* 14, p. 306.
- 18 Article by K. Santhanam in Nandurkar, (ed.), *This Was Sardar: The Commemorative Volume* (Ahmedabad), p. 323.
- 19 Pyarelal, *Last Phase*, Vol. 2, p. 716-7.
- 20 Diary of Maniben Patel, January 1948.
- 21 See Pyarelal, *Last Phase*, Vol. 2, Manuben Gandhi's *The End of an Epoch* and Chandiwala, *Gandhiji ki Dilli Diary*, 1970, Vol. 3, pp. 576-8.
- 22 Rajmohan Gandhi, *The Rajaji Story* (Bombay: Bhavan, 1984), p. 157.

### Chapter Seven: What Remains

- 1 Malsiani, *Azad*, p. 2.
- 2 Mushir U. Haq, *Muslim Politics in Modern India* (Meerut, 1971), p. 98.
- 3 Sitaramayya, *Feathers and Stones*, p. 392.
- 4 *SWJN* 13, p. 583.
- 5 Haq, *Muslim Politics*, p. 149.
- 6 *India Today*, November 15, 1988.
- 7 Kripalani, *Gandhi*, p. 287.
- 8 Syed Mahmud quoted in *Azad: A Memorial Volume*, p. 47.
- 9 Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway*, p. xii.
- 10 Baḍruddin Tyabji in *Seminar on Gandhi and Azad* (Hyderabad, 1969), p. 27.
- 11 Kripalani in *Azad: A Memorial Volume*, p. 33.
- 12 Mujeeb in *Azad: A Memorial Volume*, p. 134.

# Index

- Ahmad, J., 101  
 Ahmednagar prison, 39, 43, 91, 96  
 AICC, 26-7, 30, 38, 44, 48-50, 52, 60, 81-2  
 Ali, Asaf, 17, 39, 43, 69-70  
 Ali Brothers, 93  
 Ali, Liaqat, 46, 66-7, 82  
 Ansari, Mukhtar Ahmed, 1, 93  
 Armed Forces, The, 83-4  
 Assam, 9-11, 56-8, 68  
 Attlee, C.R., 59, 62, 68, 70-2  
 Auchinleck, Lord, 45  
 Ayyangar, N.G., 69  
 Azad, Abul Kalam, *passim*  
     his true worth, 94-6  
     his contribution, 1-2  
     reasons for his errors in *IWF*, 90-4
- Bahadurji, D.N., 12-3  
 Bardoli, 85  
 Bardoloi, Gopinath, 58  
 Bhan, Brish, 88  
 Bose, Subhas Chandra, 25, 29, 31  
 Brabourne, Lord, 15
- Cabinet Mission, The, 48, 54-64, 91  
 Campbell-Johnson, Alan, 78  
 Caroe, Olaf, 65  
 Champaran, 85  
 Chandiwala, Brijkrishna, 88  
 Chandwani, P.B., 88  
 Chattopdhyaya, Kamaladevi, 78, 81  
 Chiang Kai-shek, 3, 31  
 Chiang, Madame, 3, 31  
 Churchill, Winston, 62  
 Cleghorn, B., 101  
 Congress, Indian National, 90  
 Constituent Assembly, 32, 68  
 Cripps, Stafford, 30-4, 58-9, 63, 91
- Das, C.R., 93  
 Das Gupta, A., 6  
 Datta, V.N., 101  
 Desai, Bhulabhai, 46-7, 92  
 Desai, Mahadev, 37, 103
- De Silva, 88  
 Deo, Shankarrao, 39, 43, 78  
 Deva, Narendra, 20, 39, 43  
 Doulatram, Jairamdas, 78, 81  
 Dutt, B.C., 45, 103  
 Dwarkadas, Kanji, 73
- Emeny, Stuart, 35
- Fatima Begum, 90  
 Felton, Monica, 100  
 Fischer, Louis, 9, 90, 100-1
- Gandhi, Mahatma, 3, 10, 13, 15, 21, 25-31, 34-47, 50-62, 68-80, 82, 86, 91, 93-4, 103  
 Gandhi, Manu, 88  
 Ghosh, P.C., 39, 78  
 Ghosh, Sudhir, 59  
 Gopal, S., 20, 101-3  
 Griffiths, P.J., 21
- Haryan*, 35, 102-3  
*Hindu*, The, 100-2  
*Hindustan Times*, The, 44-5, 49, 54-5, 75, 103  
 Hindu-Muslim relations, 2-3, 94  
 Hitler, Adolf, 25, 27
- Indian Express*, 103  
*India Today*, 92  
 Interim Government, The, 49, 59-62, 65-7, 69-70  
 Islam, 1-2, 95
- Jamiat-ul-Ulema, 22-3  
 Jehangir, Cowasji, 12, 23  
 Jinnah, M.A., 9, 18, 23, 25-6, 32, 41-4, 57, 59-63, 66-7, 72-4, 82, 84, 94-5
- Kabir, Humayun, 4-9, 69, 90, 94  
 Kaur, Rajkumari Amrit, 42  
 Khaliquzzaman, Choudhry, 18-22, 43, 101-3  
 Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 1, 37, 55, 64, 74, 78-81, 93

- Khan, Hakim Ajmal, 1, 93  
 Khan, Nawab Ismail, 18-20  
 Khan Sahib, Dr, 64, 78, 80, 93  
 Kher, B.G., 11, 13, 23  
 Kidwai, Rafi Ahmed, 21, 66  
 Kishore, Jugal, 78  
 Kitchlew, Saifuddin, 82  
 Kripalani, J.B., 1, 20, 34, 39, 43, 46-7, 50-1, 70, 73, 78-9, 82, 93, 95, 100, 102-3  
 Kulkarni, V.B., 12  
  
 League, Muslim, 9-10, 17-24, 25-6  
 Linlithgow, Lord, 3, 25-8, 31, 101-2  
 Lohia, Rammanohar, 31, 44, 78-9, 81, 88, 93, 100, 102  
  
 Madgaokar, Govind, 13  
 Mahmud, Syed, 11, 14-7, 39, 92  
 Mahtab, H.K., 39-40, 103  
 Malsiani, Arsh, 100-1  
 Masud, M.N., 4-9, 101  
 Mehrotra, S.R., 19  
 Menon, Krishna, 72, 74  
 Menon, V.P., 73-4, 94  
 Mishra, D.P., 61  
 Mishra, Ramanandan, 44  
 Molesworth, General, 33, 102  
 Moon, Penderel, 100, 103  
 Moraes, Frank, 21  
 Mountbatten, Lady Edwina, 72-3  
 Mountbatten, Lord Louis, 72-8, 83, 94  
 Mujeeb, M., 96, 100  
 Mukerjee, R.K., 88  
 Munshi, K.M., 12, 19-22, 69, 101-2  
  
 Naidu, Sarojini, 78  
 Nandurkar, G.M., 103  
 Narayan, Jayaprakash, 1, 27, 44, 78-81, 88, 100  
 Nariman, K.F., 11-4, 92  
 Nehru, Jawaharlal, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 17-27, 31-9, 43, 49-54, 60-82, 86-95, 103  
 Nehru, Rajan, 88  
 N.W.F.P., The, 9-11, 56-8, 64-5, 68, 79-80  
  
 Pakistan, 19, 21, 58  
 Pandit, Vijayalakshmi, 31  
 Pant, G.B., 20, 22, 39, 43, 81-2  
 Parikh, Narhari, 12, 101  
 Partition, 72-84  
  
 Patel, Maniben, 75, 103  
 Patel, Vallabhbhai, 3, 10-4, 17, 22-30, 34-9, 43-55, 60-91, 93-4, 103  
 Peerzada, S.S., 42, 103  
 Perti, R.K., 6  
 Pethick-Lawrence, Lord, 55, 59  
 Philips, C.H., 21  
 Poona Offer, 26-8, 91  
 Prasad, Beni, 21  
 Prasad, Rajendra, 10-1, 15-23, 30, 34, 55, 60, 62, 68-70, 78, 81-5, 91  
 Presidency. The Congress, 28-9, 48-53, 90-2, 95-6  
 Pyarelal, 21, 59, 66, 88, 101, 103  
  
 Quit India, 34-47, 92  
*Qur'an*, The, 2, 96  
  
 Rahman, Hifzur, 82, 88  
 Rajagopalachari, C., 3, 10, 27, 30, 55, 60, 62, 68, 76, 78, 81, 84, 89  
 Rao, Shiva, 69  
 Rau, B.N., 69  
 Ray, Amalendu, 84  
 RIN Mutiny. The, 45, 91  
 Roy, M.N., 29, 48  
  
 Salam, Amtus, 41-3  
 Santhanam, K., 86  
 Sayeed, K.B., 102  
 Seervai, H.M., 2, 78, 81  
 Setalvad, M.C., 103  
 Sharma, Chaturbhuj, 20, 101  
 Sharma, Haridev, 42  
 Simla Conference, The, 43-4  
 Singh, Baldev, 67  
 Singh, Partap, 78  
 Sinha, A.N., 15-6  
 Sinha, S.K., 15-6  
 Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, 29, 39, 43, 51, 78, 91, 103  
 Smith, W.C., 100  
 Stewart, T.A., 15-6  
 Suhrawardy, H.S., 61  
  
 U.P., The, 9-11, 17-24  
  
 Wainwright, M.D., 19  
 Wavell, Lord, 32-3, 44, 57, 63-8, 70-1, 91, 94  
 Working Committee, The Congress, 26, 36, 46, 54, 57, 59, 66, 74-81, 85

